

Dutch firm picks RP one of Asia's top 3 investment sites

Bishop laments rising number of 'celeb' bets



By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S THE PHILIPPINE elections, the sequel, and celebrities are hoping their popularity would get them enough votes to win a seat in

BISHOP/A6

Depressed wife of Japan's Crown Prince, a prisoner of palace, says book

Suspected killer of OSG lawyer, son says cop offered him P3M to admit to murders

Tax court tells Petron: Pay P580M

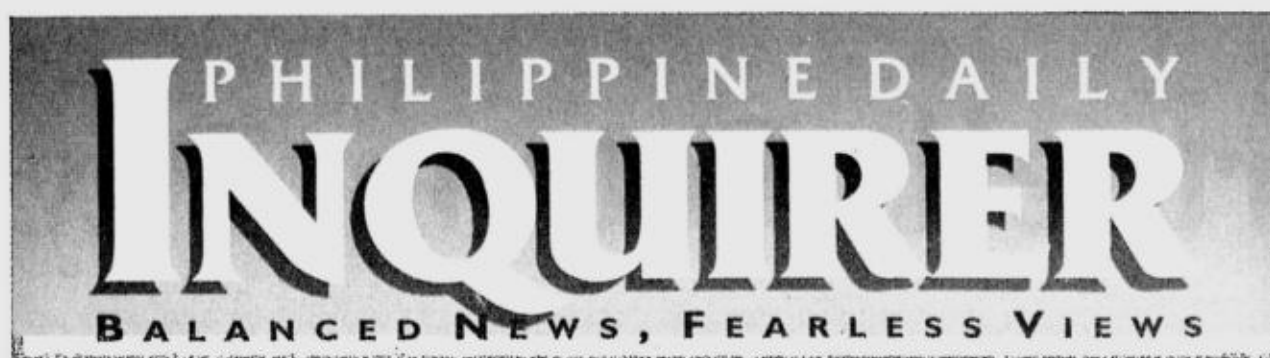
Marines in Garci scandal moved to Abu country

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ORDERED THE DEPLOYMENT of the entire 1st Marine Brigade to Basilan province, as the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) praised the Philippines for its role in the global war against terror.

Composed of about 1,500 troops, the 1st Marine Brigade was dragged into the "Hello Garci" election

MARINES/A8



Saturday, January 20, 2007

★★

6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 43 P18

website: inquirer.net

PNP admits Iloilo excesses

PCGG OKs P1.9B SMC funds but use unclear

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE ALLEGED FERTILIZER FUND scam drove the issues in the 2004 elections. A still developing so-called coconut levy fund scam may unleash torrents of denunciations in the 2007 election campaign.

This possibility arises because of reports that the Presidential Commission on Good Government has approved a resolution that will allow the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) to use the accumulated dividends from its 27 percent stake in San Miguel Corp. without stating specifically where the funds are to be used.

PCGG Commissioner Narciso Nario confirmed in a phone interview that the PCGG board approved such a resolution a week ago.

It did so after getting an opinion from the Office of the Solicitor General that the PCGG was within legal limits to use the CIIF dividends even if the companies involved are still under sequestration.

Nario said that the funds would be used in accordance with the various presidential decrees that created the CIIF although he refused to say specifically how and where the funds would be used.

The San Miguel dividends, estimated to be worth P1.9 billion, are part of the various assets that were acquired with funds

PCGG OKs/A8



YESTERDAY (above): Six years ago today, Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took her oath of office as President of the Philippines before Chief Justice Hilario Davide. Then Senate President Aquilino Pimentel and ex-President Fidel Ramos stood by her. And who was that girl holding the Bible? She was Patsy Abad, daughter of then Batanes Rep. Butch Abad.

TODAY (at left): Patsy, now 17, joins the youth at UP Diliman to commemorate Edsa II by holding a poster to sign up for their Hall of Shame where the pictures of President Arroyo and her husband prominently hang.

Aiming guns not part of orders, says police exec

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Carla P. Gomez and Alcuin Papa

FACED WITH PUBLIC outrage, the police director of Western Visayas yesterday admitted there were "excesses" in the Wednesday police assault on the Iloilo provincial capitol.

"The television footage and pictures in the newspapers undeniably showed that there were excesses," Chief Supt. Wilfredo Dulay told Inquirer Visayas in a phone interview.

Dulay said the breaking of glass doors and pointing of guns at civilians were not part of the orders to the assault team.

"They were ordered to immediately secure the civilians to spare them from harm in case a firefight occurs, but they instead pointed their firearms at the civilians," he said.

In Camp Crame, Dulay conceded to lapses in procedures when police armed with M-16 rifles stormed the capitol on Wednesday in an effort to serve a dismissal order on Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. issued by the Office of the Ombudsman. (Tupas, accused of graft, managed to obtain a 60-day temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals on the same day.)

But Dulay, who served as "ground commander" during the "clearing operation," tried to justify the actions of his men by saying they had received reports of armed men in the building.

"There were lapses from the [point of view] of the naked eye. But there was nothing wrong with what happened. There was not a single shot fired and there was no bloodshed. My men only followed my orders," he told reporters.

Dulay said his team had managed to sneak into the building plainclothesmen "who saw fully

PNP ADMITS/A6

Victim pushed Leviste on Loren Senate bid

By Fe Zamora

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. Antonio Leviste, now free on a P40,000 bail (See story on Page A8), and the aide he confessed to killing, Rafael de las Alas, were so close to each other that "Ka Paeng" could even sign checks and appointment papers in Leviste's behalf, an INQUIRER source said yesterday.

"He could sell Leviste's company if he had wanted to," said the source who was privy to the former governor's corporate affairs. The source spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Leviste is now facing charges of homicide over the killing of De las Alas, who was shot on Jan. 12 following a reported quarrel with the former governor.

Another source, longtime Leviste lawyer Riley Avila, said that such was the closeness between the two that when "Ka Paeng" suggested that Leviste's wife pursue a political career, the ex-governor agreed.

The following year, his now estranged wife, Loren Legarda-Leviste, topped the senatorial race.

De las Alas was also "one of the few who could make Loren cry," Avila said.

Avila said it was De las Alas' idea that Loren run after Leviste complained about his waning political clout "because I am no longer governor," Avila quoted the former governor as saying in 1997.

"Tony wanted to run, but Ka Paeng disagreed. You will lose, Ka Paeng told Tony, 'Let Loren run,'" Avila recalled.

Leviste followed the advice of

VICTIM/A8

Outsourcing business seen to earn \$12B by 2010

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES EXPECTS A huge jump in its outsourcing business, with earnings forecast at \$12.4 billion by 2010 after \$3.63 billion in 2006, trade and industry officials said yesterday.

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila said the number of Filipinos working in the sector was expected to jump to 920,764 in 2010 from the current 244,675.

Favila, who spoke with reporters at the launch of the e-Services Philippines 2007, a yearly industry conference and exhibition, said the anticipated upturn would follow government efforts to encourage more outsourcing of high-value, knowledge-based operations in the country, such as game development and design.

Business process outsourcing (BPO) refers to the practice by

Western companies to locate their back-office operations in foreign countries where cheap production and labor costs would help them increase their production capacity while keeping costs under control.

The simplest of this are the offshore call centers in which a Western-based company's services for customer care, marketing sales, accounting, crisis management or investor relations are

handled by an offshore office based in countries like the Philippines or India.

Although call centers have mushroomed and earned \$2.69 billion in 2006, the Philippines is also encouraging investments in more sophisticated back-office operations like accounting, software development, engineering and architectural design, medical, legal and data transcription, computer graphics/animation

and game development and design.

Favila said the government was positioning the country as a location for the higher-end knowledge process outsourcing (KPO), a global market that is expected to grow to \$17 billion by 2010.

"We have over 75,000 licensed professionals who can perform knowledge-intensive

OUTSOURCING/A8

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Kids only parents can love

By Tonette Orejas

Inquirer Central Luzon

(Fourth of a series)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AT A glance Marc Jayson Paraan, 14, looks like the average teenager clad in casual clothes.

Easily, however, that impression falls off.

His intermittent stares fixed on a wall or just about any object in a room, his long silence, and the restlessness he shows as he sits for two hours amid the lively chatter of parents and teachers tell so much about him.

"May sariling mundo (He has a



Fernando del Mundo Chief

world of his own)," says Evelyn Paraan, 44, by way of explaining how she understands autism, her son's condition.

The route and the means that Evelyn and her husband Antonio took to deal with autism to help their son have been, in their own words, circuitous and difficult.

"Mac-Mac was born a normal child. At age one, he was talkative. At age three, he sud-

denly stopped talking," Evelyn recalls of the initial signs. Sadness was all over them. He is their first child.

They first sought quack doctors to help them deal with their son's condition.

"We were told he might have been taken by a spell. We took him to quack doctors in Mt. Banahaw and elsewhere. Others said spirits might have played with him so we made offerings, asked him to be blessed by priests. Nothing happened but we did not lose hope," she said.

KIDS ONLY/A4

'I'm Art Buchwald and I just died'

WASHINGTON—"HI, I'M ART Buchwald and I just died," announces the US columnist in a video obituary released Thursday (Friday in Manila) after he passed away, aged 81, having entertained newspaper readers around the world for more than five decades.

Buchwald died late Wednesday at his home in Washington of renal failure, Buchwald's son Joel disclosed the next day.

"He died peacefully in his sleep. I was there, and my wife and his grandson," he said.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, who began his career



EXITS LAUGHING AT 81: The master of political wit and satire.

I'M ART/A8

'TLC' full bloom at Parañaque learning center

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SOME CAREFULLY STRING colorful beads together, others concentrate on putting finished bag charms and eyeglass chains in tin cans, and still others meticulously put designs on their unique gift tags.

These are just some of the skills that the young adults enrolled at The Learning Center in Parañaque City have mastered as part of their therapy.

TLC curriculum director Landa Bautista says that because of the three-hour work

TLC/A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. While Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/19/07 SOURCE PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer.news.name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laosag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tegaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Lagayay	Partly Cloudy	Gagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

IT'S FINAL

Tax court tells Petron: Pay P580M

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COURT OF TAX APPEALS HAS REJECTED A petition from Petron Corp. for it to reconsider its order directing the oil giant to pay about P580 million in excise taxes and penalties to the government after it was found guilty of using fraudulently obtained tax credit certificates (TCCs) to pay for its tax obligations from 1995 to 1997.

Petron argued that it was unaware that the TCCs that it had bought were fraudulent and should not be made liable for the use of

such instruments.

It also said that since the TCCs were issued by the One Stop Shop Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Cen-

ter (OSS), a unit of the Department of Finance, it was unfair for the court to make Petron suffer for the tax credit fraud.

But the CTA did not accept Petron's arguments, reiterating the need for the government, through the Bureau of Internal Revenue, to collect taxes.

Petron had bought several TCCs from various garments companies owned by Faustino Chingko, a major suspect in the tax credit scam in the mid-1990s, in which some 64 companies owned by Chingko obtained through fraudulent means

TCCs worth about P5.3 billion and sold these to other companies.

When the TCCs were later found to be fraudulent, it led to large revenue losses for the government. The BIR then moved to collect the taxes from Petron and other companies found to have used the fraudulent TCCs to pay for their tax obligations.

Tax credits are refund payments that certain export companies are allowed to claim for duties paid on imported materials used for the manufacture of products for export. Instead of a cash refund, the gov-

ernment issues certificates, the TCCs, which companies can use to settle tax obligations. The companies are also allowed to sell the TCCs to other companies.

Investigators said oil firms were the biggest buyers of TCCs in the secondary market. Using TCCs, Petron settled its tax obligation with the BIR in November 1999.

But when it found that the TCCs were fraudulently secured, the BIR demanded that Petron pay the taxes. The case was brought to the CTA, which decided in favor of the BIR.

In a September 2006 ruling, the

CTA ordered Petron to pay P580.24 million worth of deficiency taxes, penalties and surcharges. The amount consisted of P284.39 million in basic tax, P224.75 million in interest, and P71.08 million in surcharges.

Petron questioned why it had to pay the 25-percent surcharge on top of interest and basic tax. But the CTA said the cancellation of the TCCs submitted by Petron had the effect of the oil company not paying its excise tax liabilities. Therefore it had to pay the late payment surcharge.

Abalos defends promotion of 'Garci' boys

By Jerome Aning

THE PROMOTION OF THE SO-called "Garci boys," referring to Commission on Elections officials identified with former Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, was done without malice nor was it deliberate, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said yesterday.

Abalos was reacting to reports that several Comelec officials identified with Garcillano—who was caught on tape allegedly talking with President Macapagal-Arroyo on rigging the results of the 2004 elections—were rewarded with plum regional posts.

They officials include: Renalt Macarambon, now a division chief of Comelec's election barangay affairs department; Henry Magbutay, regional election director (RED) for Northern Mindanao; Remlane Tambuang, RED for Davao Region; Cirilo Nala, acting RED for Caraga; Rey Sumalipao, assistant regional di-

rector (ARED) for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; and Francisco Pobe, acting ARED for Caraga.

"Yes, they have been investigated by the Senate but they were never charged," Abalos said in phone interview, stressing that no Comelec official has ever been charged with any wrongdoing in relation to the "Hello, Garci" scandal.

"Mind you, these people are qualified; it would be bad if outsiders would be appointed instead," he added.

Abalos explained that Comelec had its own promotions and selection board which is in charge of approving the assignments to the agency's various departments, divisions, regional and other local offices.

"The Commission evaluates the recommendations of the board before approving it," he said, adding that officials are promoted based on seniority and good service.

ABC-5 cancels public affairs programs

By Volt Contreras

TELEVISION NETWORK ABC-5 HAS CANCELED some of its public affairs shows because of poor ratings, drawing speculations that the move has something to do with the earlier inclusion of owner Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco on the Palace watchlist of alleged destabilizers.

A "blanket announcement" of the cancellation was made to the staff on Thursday, ABC-5 Vice President for Corporate Affairs Terra Daffon told the INQUIRER yesterday in a phone interview.

Daffon cited "Dokyu," "Frontlines," "Metro," and "Ali" as among the programs that would have to go, stressing that their shelving was a purely "business decision" made following management's review of their performance last year.

In its official statement, the network said: "ABC wishes to set the record straight regarding some news reports which attempted to link the cancellation of some of the station's public affairs programs to the alleged involvement of ABC-5 owner Antonio O. Cojuangco to last year's alleged destabilization plot."

"The cancellation of certain shows is merely part of management's overall business strategy to discontinue programs that are not achieving their ratings targets, a matter that should remain internal to the company," it added.

Alluding to initial reports describing the cancelled shows as being "anti-Arroyo administration," Daffon said that would be a "grossly unfair" label of these productions.

"Dokyu," for instance, served as a venue for "indie" filmmakers, usually students and amateurs, "a groundbreaking show that encouraged the growth of the genre," she said.

The cancellation would affect the 30 to 45 talents working under contract with ABC-5, a network insider said.

It was anti-Arroyo critic and former ambassador Roy Señeres who, in an INQUIRER interview on July 5 last year, first named the ABC-5 chair among Señeres' fellow supporters of a plot to overthrow the Arroyo presidency.

Señeres then urged Cojuangco and the others—former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos, former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, construction mogul F. F. Cruz Jr. and old-

rich scion Iñigo Zobel—to come out proudly into the open, saying they were engaged in a patriotic act.

Two weeks later, Cojuangco showed up at the National Bureau of Investigation to file an affidavit denying being part of any attempt to bring down the government.

Malacañang by then had confirmed it had been monitoring Cojuangco's activities and those of other suspected coup supporters.

Investigators had said that ABC-5 facilities were used to produce a video in which Gen. Danilo Lim, a former chief of the Army's elite Scout Rangers, was seen and heard calling on fellow soldiers to withdraw support from Ms. Arroyo.

Newsbreak stops hard-copy edition but remains online

By Alcuin Papa

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF NEWSBREAK, AN investigative magazine once financed by Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, came out to deny reports that the publication is closing down.

In a phone interview, Marites Dañguilan-Vitug said Newsbreak was merely ending its hard-copy edition to go entirely online.

She said the "shift" was all due to "financial constraints, and I deny that it has anything to do with any political pressure on Cojuangco."

Vitug said the magazine, which draws funding from a non-profit foundation, got "seed money" from the businessman for its debut issue in January 2001. Cojuangco has since been placing ads in the publication.

"Mr. Cojuangco has placed ads consistently

and is one of the major advertisers. He is not pulling out his ads," she said.

The magazine also has ads from San Miguel Corp., the Ayala group of companies and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

"It's hard to sustain a fortnightly publication. We have advertisers, but we need more," she added.

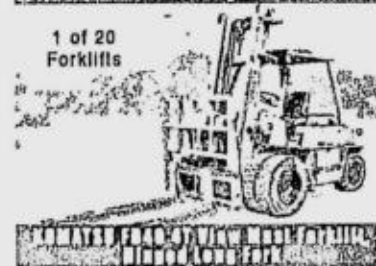
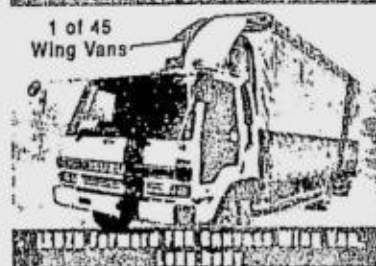
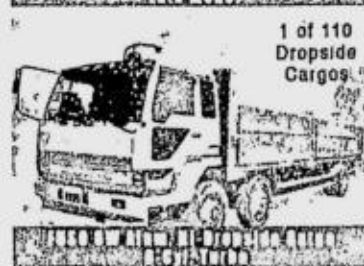
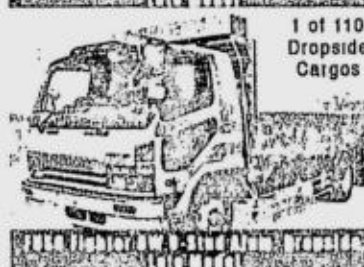
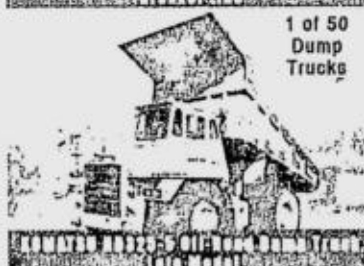
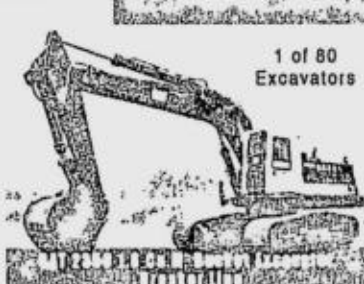
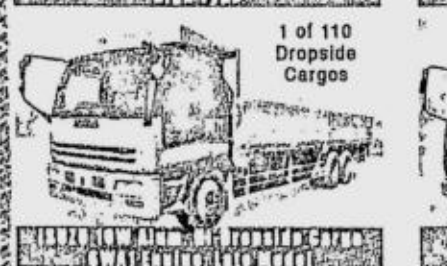
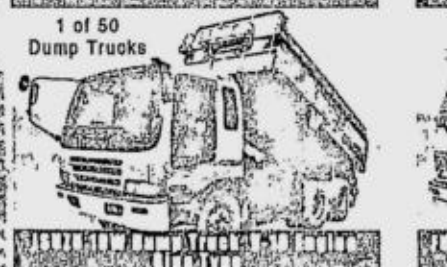
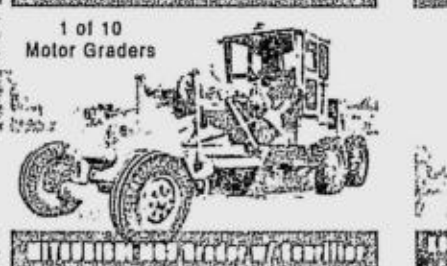
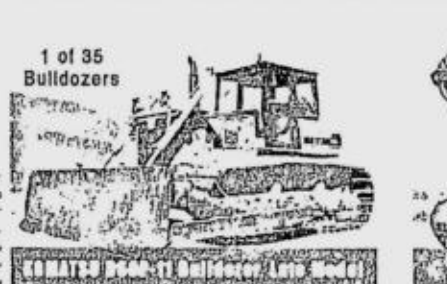
In her editorial in the latest issue of the magazine, Vitug announced that it was their second-to-the-last hard copy edition. She said they were keeping "most" of their staff and would continue publishing on their website www.newsbreak.com.ph.

Vitug said they had explained the change to their subscribers as early as December. "We planned this last year and we wrote our subscribers in December. It's really financial and has nothing to do with politics," she said. With Volt Contreras

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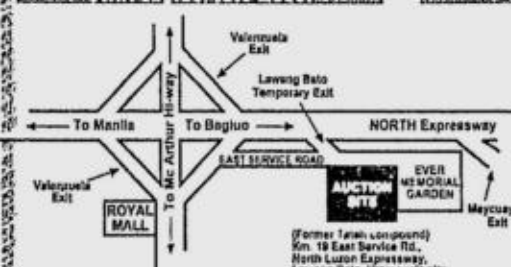
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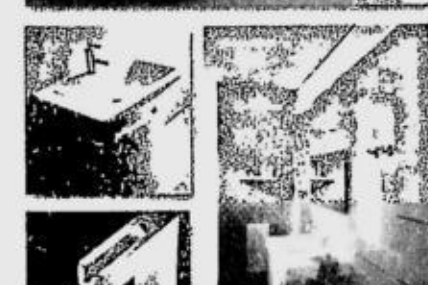
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Another activist shot dead

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER and teacher was gunned down in front of his students by two assassins on the campus of the University of Eastern Philippines in Catarman, Northern Samar yesterday afternoon.

Jose Maria Cui, a founding member of Bayan Muna in Northern Samar, is victim number 266 in the growing list of political killings in the Philippines compiled by the *Inquirer* since 2001. By the count of Karapatan, a human rights organization, more than 700 have been killed by antileftist death squads under the Arroyo administration.

"The 53-year-old engineering professor was killed between 3 and 4 p.m. by two men who shot him at close range while he was conducting midterm examinations inside his classroom," Katrina Castillo, acting secretary general of Katugod-Sinirangan Bisayas said in a telephone interview.

According to Castillo, one of the two assailants shot Cui in the head and chest using a .45 caliber pistol. The two wore green T-shirts and had no covering on their faces.

They sped away on a motorcycle and exited towards the direction of the next town of Mondragon, Castillo added.

Cui, the 10th militant killed in Eastern Visayas, was brought to the campus clinic but was pronounced dead on arrival.

He was the secretary general of Katugod-Northern Samar and chair of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers. He had a wife and three children.

The group blamed the military, adding that Cui's death was part of the military's Oplan Bayan Laya aimed at "neutralizing those in the progressive and militant organizations."

"We strongly condemn the killing of Professor Cui who is a dedicated human rights advocate," Castillo added.

But 1Lt. Jose Mari Chico, public affairs information division chief of the 8th Infantry Division, based in Catbalogan, Samar, denied any involvement of the military.

"We are the usual suspects in any killing involving a militant personality. But we strongly condemn any killings ourselves. We are open to any investigation," Chico said in a telephone interview.

"We condemn this dastardly act," said Karapatan secretary-general Marie Hilao-Enriquez.

"It's scary. After the (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) summit, they again start with the killings," Enriquez said.

"They apparently didn't want any talk of the killings during the international summit," she chided.

Karapatan also blames military-linked death squads for the spate of political killings.

"The killings should stop. These are senseless killings and we are losing good people...people who are not liars, cheats nor thieves," Enriquez said.

But military spokespersons in Manila deny the armed forces have anything to do with the killings and blame communist guerillas for a number of assassinations. (With reports from Norman Bordadora)

Nemenzo trapped as Indon cops ring leftist assembly

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER UP PRESIDENT FRANCISCO Nemenzo yesterday found himself trapped inside a hotel in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, as police and local "rightist" militias surrounded the congress of a leftist organization being held inside.

Sonny Melencio, a spokesperson for Nemenzo's Laban ng Masa and the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, said that the long-time political science professor—one of five international delegates to the conference—was able to leave the venue of the congress after several tense hours.

The three-day gathering that began on Friday afternoon at the Hotel Wisma Sejahtera is the founding congress of newly formed Partai Persatuan Pembebasan Rakyat Nasional or Papernas. The name translates to National Liberation Party of Unity.

"Laban ng Masa condemns the harassment by Indonesian police and local militias and appeals to human rights groups and the progressive community in the Asian region to protest the siege of the Papernas congress which is a threat to life and security of the more than a hundred participants trapped inside the venue," Melencio said.

Indonesian police and local militia belonging to the Forum Anti-Komunis, allegedly a far-right group, marched in front of the venue in Kaliurang, Jogjakarta, carrying anticommunist placards and vowing to disperse the gathering.

"Laban ng Masa is appalled by the actions of the Indonesian police and this local militia which are bent on terrorizing the participants of a peaceful gathering aimed at launching the Papernas electoral party," Melencio said.

"The anticommunist hysteria that is being whipped up in front of the conference site recalls the period in 1965 when gangs of Suharto thugs roamed around the countryside and massacred a million people," he added.

Oil firms cut prices as world prices tumble

By Abigail L. Ho

FALLING WORLD OIL PRICES and the stronger peso yesterday prompted oil firms to slash anew the pump prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter.

This is the second price cuts for gasoline, diesel and kerosene since the start of the year.

Chevron Philippines Inc. and Seaoil Philippines Inc. implemented the price reduction effective at 2 p.m. yesterday.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Flying V followed at 6 p.m., while Total (Philippines) Corp. effected the same price adjustment at 8 p.m.

Eastern Petroleum Corp. will cut fuel prices by the same amount at 6 a.m. today.

In an earlier interview, Inde-

pendent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association president Glenn Yu said motorists could expect another P1-a-liter reduction in fuel prices in the coming weeks.

He said local oil firms could still reduce their prices as the price of oil in the international market had significantly gone down over the past weeks while the peso has continued to strengthen against the dollar.

With yesterday's 50-centavo-a-liter price reduction, motorists could expect another 50-centavo-a-liter price cut by next week.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude dropped to an average of \$52.48 a barrel as of Jan. 16 from \$58.68 a barrel the previous month.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (Mops) benchmark for refined petroleum products also slipped to an average of \$62.55 a barrel in the first 16 days of January, from last month's \$68.16 a barrel.

Mops-based diesel slid to a \$69.08-a-barrel average in the Jan. 1-16 period, after soaring to \$72.20 a barrel last month.

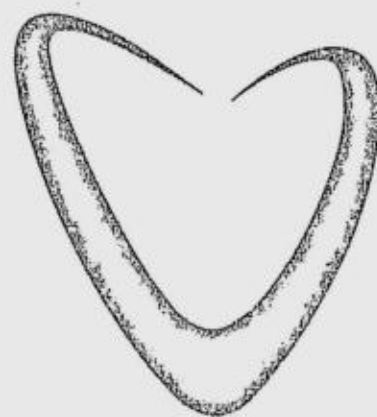
Yu, also the president of Seaoil, noted that a \$1-a-barrel

drop in international oil prices should translate to a reduction of 35 centavos a liter at the pump.

The new price cut brings premium unlead-

ed gasoline prices to between P35.03 and P37.56 a liter, diesel to between P29.77 and P33.80 a liter, and kerosene to between P33.19 and P38 a liter.

AstraZeneca



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Below \$51 a barrel

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES REMAINED slumped below \$51 in Asian trade Friday, at levels not seen since May 2005, as the market focused on a larger-than-expected rise in US crude stockpiles, dealers said.

At 2:20 p.m., New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for February delivery, was at \$50.34 a barrel, down 14 cents from late US trades where it had touched \$49.90, its lowest level since May 2005.

Brent North Sea crude for March was down three cents at \$51.72, recovering from earlier lows under \$51.

"The market broke through the \$50 level (Thursday). It looked like it fell off a cliff. It set up the market for a test of a price level below \$50," said Tony Nunan of Mitsubishi Corporation's international petroleum business in Tokyo.

Oil prices fell after the US Department of Energy, in a weekly report, said crude oil inventories rose 6.8 million barrels to 321.5 million, compared with expectations for a gain of just 100,000 barrels.

Nunan said a factor causing the crude build was cutbacks by refineries because of warmer US winter weather.

Crude prices have dipped sharply since the start of 2007, in part due to the mild winter temperatures across the United States, which dented demand for heating fuel. **AFP**

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Parents help children cope

From page A1

Some friends advised them to consult Dr. Jocelyn Eusebio, a development pediatrician, at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City. After undergoing several rounds of audio-visual and brain tests, Marc Jayson proved to be afflicted with autism.

His case was considered nonverbal. That meant he was not deaf but his speech was impaired but he was capable of being trained.

"No matter how hard Dr. Eusebio tried to explain to me what autism was, I could not make myself understand it," Evelyn says.

At the doctor's suggestion, she watched "Ipapatawad Mo," a film that starred Vilma Santos, to be able to get an idea of what autism is.

Special education

The couple was also encouraged to enroll the boy in a Special Education (SpEd) center. Because she found no such facility then in Pampanga, Evelyn enrolled him in Bulacan, which meant traveling back and forth, some 70 km almost daily, for three years.

Then she put him on a one-on-one speech and physical therapy session under Mae Punzalan, a University of the Philippines education graduate who handled a class of children with disabilities (CWDs) at the San Fernando Elementary School.

In June 2006, Marc Jayson joined the SpEd class at the Inocencio Magtoto Memorial Foundation Inc. here.

Although she has gone out of her way to try every solution, Evelyn says it took her three years to accept her son's disability.

Support group

Their support network consisted of friends, relatives, SpEd teachers and prayer groups from the Catholic Church.

Then and now, parents of autistic children have yet to be organized as a group in Pampanga or in Central Luzon, according to workers assisting CWDs.

To provide a more loving environment to their son, the Paraan couple constantly explains Marc Jayson's condition to their two younger children.

At home and in school, his activities still need assistance especially in bathing, toilet use and brushing teeth. He has developed routines and can carry out errands like fixing beds.

But Evelyn has remained focused on two goals.

"I want Mac-Mac to learn to live independently, to hear him say again 'Mama,' 'Papa,'" she says.

Without any help from his stepmother,

Raquel, Stanley Sawit II introduced himself by spelling his complete name and telling his age, 26.

Raquel Sawit, 54, a high school graduate, said she did not allow her lack of education and his being not her biological son get in the way in helping him cope with autism.

Being sensitive for signs and loving each other in an unconditional way helped them endure the trying times, Raquel says.

Stanley was already 5 years old when Raquel married his father, an engineer.

Aside from the medical consultations that confirmed Stanley's condition, Raquel also read books and newspaper clippings on autism. These, she says, convinced her to really take care of him. On the side, she reared a stepdaughter.

Learning

Raquel started by observing Stanley's behavior. She says his daily habit of watching ants that crawled on the front window and the great amount of attention he put on these told her that Stanley was capable of exerting focus.

She taught Stanley to say "Mama," which he managed to do after a week of coaching.

Stanley then began imitating some chores she did. It took him years to master sweeping the floor, using the washing machine, locking doors and windows, throwing the garbage.

She also tutored him to read, write and count. She bought him a toy car so he could have physical activities. She trained him to do proper walking, which ended the days when he walked by tiptoeing.

At 7, Stanley was enrolled in a "normal" school because there was no SpEd class then in Tarlac where they lived.

The teacher, Raquel remembered, begged from continuing to have Stanley in the class because he disrupted the classes with his noise. Raquel continued teaching him at home, consulting occasionally with the teacher.

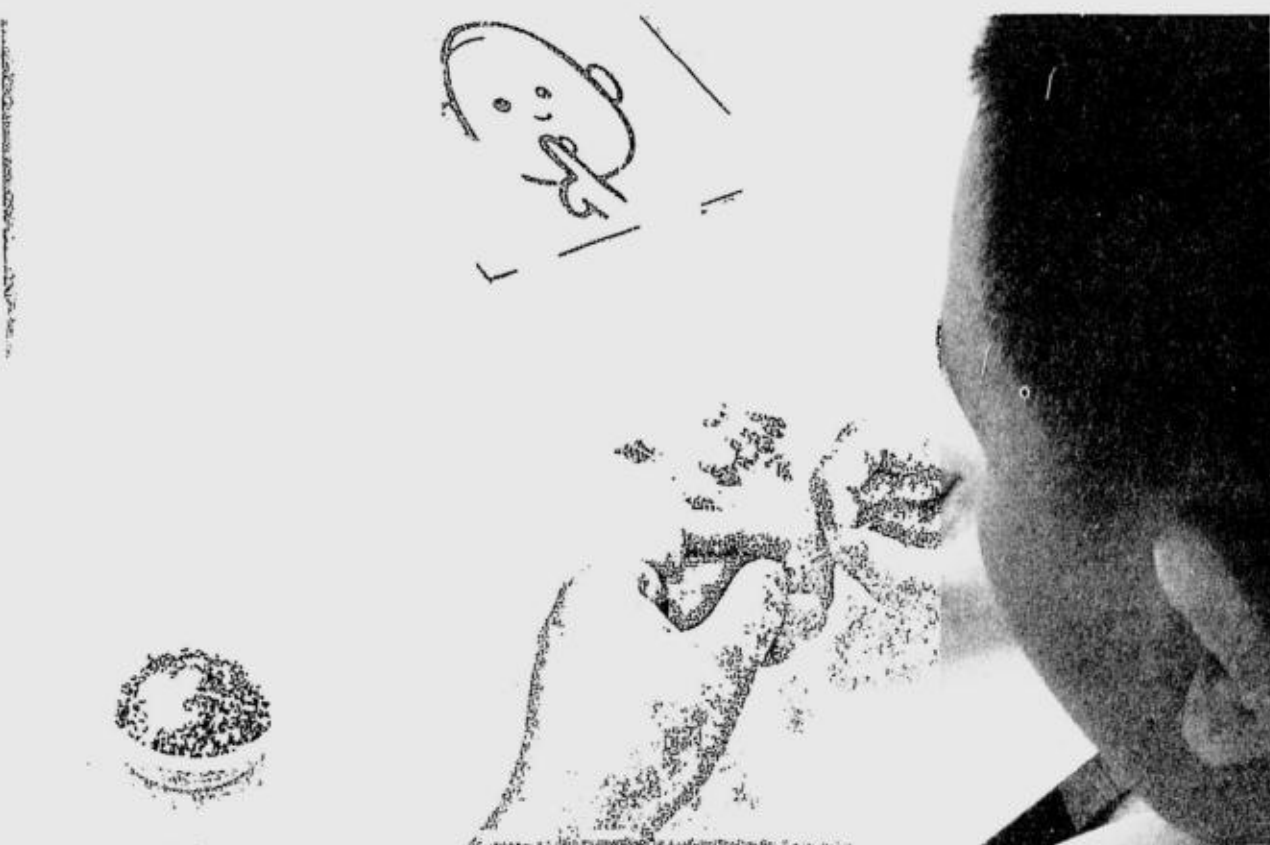
The family moved to Angeles City when Stanley was 10.

Raquel scouted for a SpEd center and found one at the Dau Elementary School in Mabalacat.

It was under teacher Agnes Batul, who handled that SpEd class, that Stanley finished up to Grade 6. He dropped out of what Batul has designed as the start of secondary education.

"He's relatively independent now," says Raquel.

Like the Paraans, the Sawits had no support group from parents of autistic children to rely on. The network was comprised of their friends and relatives, and leaders of their Seventh Day Adventist Church.



THE LEARNING CENTER in Parañaque, now on its 30th year, teaches functional literacy and fine-tunes the motor skills and the concentration of students afflicted with mental development disabilities like autism.

'TLC' full bloom at Parañaque ...

From page A1

sessions at the TLC's kitchen and activity workshops, the students afflicted with autism, Down Syndrome, learning disabilities and cerebral palsy have fine-tuned their motor skills and allowed them to concentrate on their tasks.

More importantly, Bautista says the students feel much better about themselves because they realized that they can develop useful skills, and that the beautiful products they work so hard on bring joy to the people who buy them.

Bautista says the workshops were set up soon after TLC was established in 1975 by Swiss national Benita Steiger and a group of teachers who were concerned about providing skills to children with special needs.

Functional literacy

More than 30 years later, TLC continues to teach children with disabilities to read and write, and the older children aged at least 14 years old to make the most of their knowledge.

"We teach the older kids functional literacy, which means teaching them how to get information from a directory, read the prescriptions when they buy medicine and to count change," Bautista says.

Younger children devote half the day for their lessons, while the older kids go through pre-vocational skills training. Here, they learn basic and simple tasks, such as packaging and sealing bottles.

After that, many of the students, majority of whom are male, move on to work half the day at the sheltered workshop, which is divided into the kitchen and activity sections.

In the kitchen workshop, the students learn how to work together to prepare pickled papayas (*atsara*) and chocolate polvorons as well as bake banana cakes and cookies.

In the activity workshop, they learn different arts and crafts. So far, they have made bag charms, necklaces, bracelets, key chains and all-occasion and Christmas gift tags.

Carpentry

"We have just introduced carpentry, and some are learning to make mosaic tiles," Bautista says.

She says tasks are assigned according to the capability of each student. Students with "higher functionalities" handle the more intricate tasks, and are quick to learn new skills.

Those at the opposite end of the development spectrum, take care of the more simple tasks, such as putting products inside bags.

"We try to help them make the most of their skills," says Bautista.

The students work under the close supervision of the teachers, who encourage them to work as a group.

But if they are more comfortable working alone, especially those with autism, then they are left by themselves while still doing their assigned tasks.

As all of the students have learned to do their work well, TLC eventually joined bazaars in 1998 to raise funds



KITCHEN WORKSHOP at The Learning Center is a busy section as cooking is one of two major physical activities for children with mental disabilities.

to continue the program and give stipends to the working students.

Bestseller

Bautista proudly says that the pickled papayas have always been the students' best selling item, although they had to stop production last year when the prices of papayas soared.

More companies are also placing orders for the school's beaded products, especially with the help of Gifts & Graces, a nongovernment organization aimed at marketing products of marginalized groups, other NGOs and special schools such as TLC.

As Gifts & Graces and other groups pitch in to generate demand for the students' products, Bautista says it is TLC's hope that the workshops will be able to pay the students.

They will then get not only a sustainable livelihood, but long-term therapy as well.

Philippine Society of Hypertension & Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society
JOINT 12TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
January 31 - February 2, 2007
Crown Plaza Galleria Manila, Quezon City
Theme: "Decision-making in Hypertension and Dyslipidemia Prevention and Intervention in Specific Populations"

Senator Edgardo J. Angara
Keynote Speaker

Nelson S. Abelardo, MD
President
Philippine Society of Hypertension

Dr. Ruby T. Go
President
Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society

Joint confab focuses on clinical decision-making

Senator Angara keynotes opening ceremonies

Hypertension and dyslipidemia experts, and all others interested in these fields of cardiovascular medicine, will again convene for the 12th joint annual convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society (PLAS). The annual convention is slated on January 31 to February 2, 2007 at the Crown Plaza Galleria Manila.

Senator Edgardo J. Angara will give the keynote speech during the opening ceremonies on January 31, Wednesday, at 9 am. Sen. Angara is the longest serving senator in the post-EDSA Senate, and was the head of this august chamber from 1993-1995. He has established a reputation as a resolute reformer and firm leader, winning praise for his non-confrontational stance on contentious domestic and international issues, while building consensus at the same time.

Among the many laws he has sponsored are the Senior Citizens Act (or The Angara Law) that allows the elderly to avail of substantial discounts when buying medicine or availing of healthcare services, and the National Health Insurance Act, or PHILHEALTH, that provides financial assistance to every citizen when they get confined in a hospital.

This year, the scientific program of the joint confab focuses on the decision-making process involved in the prevention and control of hypertension and dyslipidemia in specific populations such as the old, the young and patients at-risk at the workplace.

"The scientific committee has developed a program that will address the issues confronting us. It is our way of staying relevant by bringing to the fore the pertinent issues over mindful that the facts and figures presented, will eventually be applied in the practical arena of the clinics and hospitals," says Dr. Nelson Abelardo, PSH president.

Among the pertinent issues which will be discussed during the convention is how to find the balance between hypertension guidelines and the real clinical settings. The issue whether current clinical studies on metabolic syndromes are appropriate to actual patient population will also be debated on. The highly informative and interactive program consists of three plenary lectures, 10 symposia, one debate and at least ten additional satellite symposia organized by participating pharmaceutical companies.

A Lay Forum with top experts in hypertension and dyslipidemia or cholesterol problems as resource persons will also be conducted as a pre-convention event on January 28 (Sunday) 1-5 pm, also at the Crown Plaza Galleria Manila. Patients and those with risk factors for atherosclerosis like hypertension, dyslipidemia, diabetes, obesity, smoking, strong family history and excessive stress, even benefit from the forum. Registration is free for this forum but participants have to preregister since seats are limited.

A special part of the convention is the presentation of the research projects supported by either the PSH or PLAS and the awarding of recognition to some of those works through the PSH-Therapharma Yola QM Sult Young Investigators Award and PLAS-Pfizer Lipid Award.

For convention inquiries and registration, interested physicians and health care professionals may call the PSH/PLAS Secretariat at 837-7979 or 887-7073. Registration on-site will be accommodated but delegates are advised to register beforehand to avoid the long queue on opening day.

	January 28 Sunday	January 31 Wednesday	February 1 Thursday	February 2 Friday
7:00				
7:30				
8:00				PSH BUSINESS MEETING
8:30			PRESENTATION OF THE PSH & PLAS SUPPORTED RESEARCH WORKS	PLAS BUSINESS MEETING
9:00			PLENARY SESSION 2 Managing the Epidemic of Risk Factors Leading to Chronic Kidney Disease Dr. Lynn C. Amerson-Gomez	PLENARY SESSION 3 The Hypertension & Dyslipidemia Syndrome and the Role of the Local Setting Dr. Robert T. Pae-Puckson
9:30			COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS	
10:00		OPENING CEREMONIES OPENING OF EXHIBITS		
10:30		PLENARY SESSION 1 The Spectrum of Hypertension and Dyslipidemia Dr. Edgardo J. Angara	COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS	
11:00		2007 PSH-THERAPHARMA YOLA QM SULT YOUNG INVESTIGATOR'S AWARD	CS-8 Hypertension: Finding the Balance Between the Guidelines and the Realities in the Local Setting	CS-9 The Big and Small High and Low in Vascular Medicine
11:30		2007 PLAS-PFIZER LIPID AWARD		
12:00				
12:30				
1:00				
1:30				
2:00				
2:30				
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7:30				
8:00				

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We've nothing to explain, BI tells UK cleric

By Leila B. Salaverria

NO EXPLANATION ON WHY UNITED Kingdom priest Fr. Frank Nally was denied entry and deported from the Philippines earlier this month is forthcoming, at least not from the Bureau of Immigration.

Immigration regulation chief Gary Mendoza yesterday said the government was not required to tell Nally the reason for his inclusion in the blacklist that led to his deportation.

The 52-year-old Nally heads the Solidarity Desk of the Columban Fathers in the United Kingdom and suspects it was caused by his involvement in a fact-finding mission on mining activities in Mindanao.

Nally said he was still waiting for an explanation from Philippine immigration authorities about his deportation on Jan. 5, a week before the start of the tightly-guarded summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in Cebu.

"With all due respect, the Philippine government or the immigration bureau is not duty bound to explain to a person on the blacklist why he is there," Mendoza said when sought for a reaction. "It is the prerogative of a sovereign country to exclude aliens."

And even if the BI wanted to tell Nally why he was barred from entering the Philippines, the bureau could not do so because it does not know the reason behind it, Mendoza said.

He said the order for Nally's inclusion in the blacklist came from the Department of Justice, and that he was not aware whether or not it had something to do with the priest's involvement in investigating the social and environmental impact of mining in the country.

"The Bureau of Immigration only implements orders from the higher authorities. We are not privy to the reason behind it," the regulation chief said.

Nally said immigration personnel at the Naia stopped him from leaving the airport and told him he was blacklisted, but did not offer any explanation. He said he was only informed that the order had come from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency. He was subsequently deported.

Should Nally write the BI for the reason for his exclusion, Mendoza said the bureau would refer the matter to the DOJ which ordered his blacklisting.

He also said a representative from Nally's government could get in touch with the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs to seek an explanation for what happened. Tens of thousands of Filipino workers are based in the United Kingdom.

Nally's deportation came a few days before the start of the Asean summit in Cebu.

Before December, the justice department instructed the BI to keep a tight watch on foreigners entering the country to check for troublemakers who intend to hold rallies during the Asean summit.

MISSING CHURCH FUNDS

Filipino priest appears in Virginia court



RODIS: Case against popular Roman Catholic priest left US parishioners shocked.

AP PHOTO/CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND VIA THE DAILY PROGRESS

LOUISA, VIRGINIA—A ROMAN Catholic priest from the Philippines accused of embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars from two rural Virginia parishes appeared in court Thursday as some of his former parishioners looked on.

Rev. Rodney L. Rodis, 50, appeared briefly in Louisa Circuit Court before Judge Timothy Sanner. He did not enter a plea and the judge continued the case until Feb. 26. Rodis is free on \$10,000 bond.

Rodis, who did not respond to questions outside of court, wore a bulky green jacket and it was not apparent if he was wearing his cleric's collar.

The Roman Catholic Diocese

of Richmond has said Rodis embezzled more than \$600,000 from his two parishes, but a state police investigator said the sum could top \$1 million.

In court, about a dozen people watched their former priest with grim faces. Many said they felt betrayed by a man they had once considered a charismatic leader.

"We're all in a state of shock and very, very disappointed," said Kathleen Pfeiffer, 63, of Mineral, Virginia, who had been a member of St. Jude since 1996.

"Nobody suspected this. He's just a very little, round, jovial guy," Pfeiffer said. "We all went out of our way to help and help the parish."

On Jan. 8, Rodis was indicted on one count of felony embezzlement. Rodis had been pastor at St. Jude in Mineral and Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Bumpass between 1993 and May 2006. He is retired.

Court records show that police seized from Rodis' home bank records and other items, including a receipt for Lucky Money dated May 24, 2006. Lucky Money Inc. is a service for wiring money to the Philippines, Rodis' home country.

Rodis is also suspected of having a wife and children. He and Joyce Sillador-Rodis are listed as husband and wife on a deed of trust for a mortgage on a house they shared with three

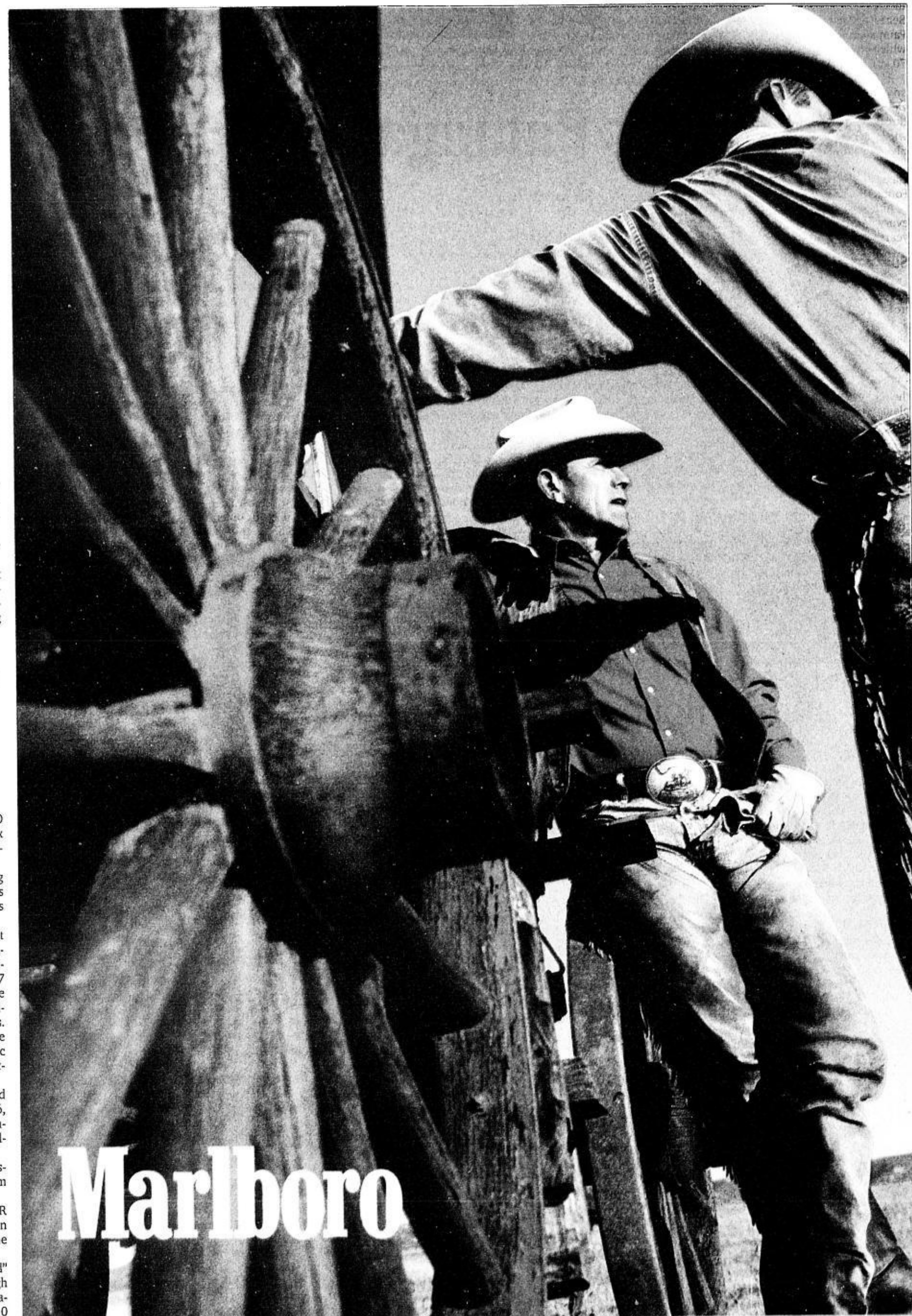
children, according to records in Spotsylvania Circuit Court.

Rodis has told the Richmond Times-Dispatch he is not married to Joyce Sillador, though neighbors say he has referred to her as his wife for the past decade.

Authorities allege Rodis opened an account in a church's name at a bank in Fredericksburg, deposited donations in the account and then diverted them for personal use.

The diocese said it became aware of financial irregularities in the fall when a donor to Immaculate Conception requested verification of a \$1,000 contribution for tax purposes and the parish could not find a record of the donation.

AP



No decrease in BIR target for 2007, Buñag clarifies

By Cynthia D. Balana

REVENUE COMMISSIONER JOSE MARIO Buñag yesterday said the P765.9 billion tax collection target for this year represents a significant increase over last year's goal.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Buñag clarified a report that said BIR had lowered its collection target this year from last year's P675.353 billion.

Earlier reports said the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), the inter-agency body tasked with setting economic policies and targets, had reduced the original 2007 target of P784.1 billion by P18.2 billion because the anticipated lower interest rates would adversely affect tax collections on bank deposits. The DBCC is composed of representatives of the Department of Finance, the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Budget and Management.

Explaining the revenue target, Buñag said that of the P675.353 billion target in 2006, P601.4 billion was to come from BIR operations, P25 billion from customs and P49 billion from treasury collections.

This year, of the P765.9 billion tax goal assigned to the BIR, P730 billion will come from BIR operations alone, he said.

So the collections that come from BIR alone actually increased from a P601.4 billion tax goal in 2006 to P730 billion in 2007, the BIR chief stressed.

He also said BIR officials were not "embattled" as pointed out in the report, but were in "high spirits" since the BIR collection from its operations in 2006 reached P611 billion, or almost P10 billion more than the P601.4 billion actual target.

Reports from the DBCC, however, said the revision of the targets resulted partly from BIR's disagreement with its assigned collection target, which the tax agency had claimed was too high and did not take into account economic fundamentals affecting tax collection.

Last year, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile came to Buñag's defense, calling for a review of the "unrealistic" budget and revenue goals as the basis for the enforcement of the Lateral Attrition Law.

Under Republic Act 9335, or the Attrition law, officials of the BIR and Customs would be removed from the service if their revenue collections falls by at least 7.4 percent below the collection target.

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With no TRO, Jaen mayor steps down

JAEN, NUEVA ECILJA—MAYOR Antonio Esquivel vacated his office after failing to get a temporary restraining order on his dismissal before 5 p.m. yesterday.

But Esquivel, who left his office 30 minutes before his self-imposed deadline, promised his supporters that he would return.

Vice Mayor Santiago Austria arrived at the Jaen town hall at 4:50 p.m. and assumed the vacated post. He took his oath of office before Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanan on Tuesday.

Chief Insp. Arnel Santiago, Jaen police chief, said hundreds of Esquivel supporters left the town hall after the mayor stepped down.

Esquivel's move ended his five-day protest against his dismissal by the Office of the Ombudsman, which found him liable for illegally terminating three directors of the local waterworks district three years ago.

Senior Supt. Allen Bantolo, Nueva Ecija police director, said Esquivel kept his promise that he would step down if he failed to secure a TRO from the Court of Appeals.

"He invited me to usher him out of the town hall," Bantolo told the INQUIRER on the phone.

Bantolo said Esquivel had also asked his supporters to leave the town hall, where they had massed since Monday.

Police escorted the mayor to his home.

Josefina Castilla-Go, director of the Department of Interior and Local Government-Central Luzon, waited at the town hall to see if Esquivel would honor the deadline.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police director, said at least 20 policemen would remain in Jaen to secure the town hall. *Reports from Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



WHAT'S GOING ON? Supporters of Batangas Gov. Arman Sanchez get an update from provincial administrator Ronald Geron during their vigil on Jan. 16 at the provincial capitol. On Friday, Sanchez wins a Temporary Restraining Order that bars the DILG, the DOJ and the PNP from enforcing the suspension order for 60 days.

INQUIRER PHOTO

Court gives Batangas gov 60-day reprieve

By Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BATANGAS CITY—EMBATTLED Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez has won a reprieve, with the Court of Appeals issuing yesterday morning a temporary restraining order on his preventive suspension from office.

The TRO issued by Associate Justice Regalado Maambong, presiding judge of the appellate court's 4th Division, and signed by clerk of court Evangeline Llamas, barred the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Justice and the Philippine National Police from enforcing the suspension order for 60 days.

Maambong said the implementation of the suspension order would cause "injustice" to Sanchez, and directed the DILG and Vice Gov. Richard Recto to file their comments within 10 days.

The justice also said Batangas province was "amply protected" through an earlier cease-and-desist order issued on Nov. 16, 2005, against the release of the funds al-

located for the Real Property Tax Computerization Project."

The project is the subject of the corruption case filed by Recto against Sanchez, on which the suspension order issued by the Office of the Ombudsman is based.

Triumph

"It is a big stab in a person's back that he would not be given an opportunity to explain himself. I thank Almighty God and the court for giving me this TRO," Sanchez said at a press conference.

His lawyer Ferdinand Topacio said in a phone interview that the TRO was "a triumph of reason over lunacy" and "a triumph of the rule of law over political vengeance, hooliganism and bullying tactics."

Sanchez said the court's ruling would restore order in the capitol and give him justice.

At least 500 of the governor's supporters had been gathered at the capitol premises since Friday last week, each wearing a red shirt in protest of the suspension order.

A fireworks display and a

thanksgiving Mass followed the press conference that Sanchez called yesterday afternoon.

Topacio said he and his client were preparing for the hearing for the petition for preliminary injunction they had earlier lodged before the appellate court.

Winners

Reached on the phone, Recto said he had yet to see a copy of the TRO but added that he respected it.

"With or without the TRO, I have proven my point that Sanchez is corrupt. Until now, he still cannot explain if he had indeed awarded a government project to the daughter of his sister," Recto said, adding:

"He cannot defend himself in court. That's why he had to resort to technicalities [to] stop the suspension order. He's the biggest loser here. The winners are the people of Batangas and myself."

Recto also said he would leave it to his lawyers to plan their next moves while he concentrated on preparing for the midterm elections in May.

He will seek the governorship under the United Opposition.

Normal operations

Provincial Administrator Ronaldo Geron said that as of yesterday morning, government transactions at the capitol, excluding the governor's office, had normalized.

The DILG served the suspension order on Sanchez on Tuesday.

In reaction, Sanchez holed up in his office while hundreds of his supporters barricaded the capitol complex with container vans, buses and trucks.

The barricades were removed on Wednesday, and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno gave Sanchez—along with Mayor Antonio Esquivel of Jaen, Nueva Ecija—up to 5 p.m. yesterday to vacate their offices.

But Maambong said in his ruling that the enforcement of the suspension order "would work injustice" on Sanchez because his six-month preventive suspension without pay might be fully implemented even before the court could act on his petition for pre-

liminary injunction.

Associate Justices Rosmari D. Carandang and Arturo G. Tayag concurred in the ruling.

Old tactics

In his petition, Sanchez said the suspension order violated the spirit of the ban against suspensions during the election period.

He pointed out that the ban sought "to put a stop to the old discredited tactics of yore, wherein one candidate attains a despicable unfair advantage against a political rival by causing the suspension of the latter at a time when the electoral campaign begins to heat up..."

According to Amado Valdez, dean of the University of the East College of Law in Manila, the suspensions currently being implemented by the DILG are legally flawed because during the election period, only the Commission on Elections is empowered by the Constitution to carry out such orders.

Valdez said the DILG should seek the legal opinion of the Comelec, not the DOJ, on the matter.

'We don't need these'

Even Michael Defensor, President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff, is against the rash of suspensions.

Defensor appealed to the Ombudsman to temporarily stop the suspension of elected local officials facing various charges.

"We do not intend to preempt the Ombudsman because it's an independent body, but we hope they will see that we do not need these situations in the middle of an election period," he said in Villasis, Pangasinan, where he inaugurated the town hall. Defensor said the implementation of suspension orders during the election period was being used by members of the opposition as a basis to criticize the Arroyo administration.

"There is also the general perception that it's [a fight between] the administration [and] the opposition. But it's not," he said, adding that most of those suspended were members of the ruling Lakas party. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum in Manila; Gabriel Cardinosa, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

PNP admits Iloilo excesses

From page A1

armed provincial guards under "the control of the governor."

"We were ready. We would not have entered the building just like that. The situation called for it. I am confident we did our best," he said, adding that he was prepared to cooperate in any inquiry into the incident.

Padlocks, not glass

Backed with a V-150 armored personnel carrier, more than 200 policemen, including antiriot teams and members of the Regional Mobile Group, had stormed the capitol.

TV footage showed a member of the Regional Mobile Group breaking the glass doors at the back of the entrance to the capitol even after other policemen had entered the building.

Dulay told Inquirer Visayas that the mallet was meant to open padlocked iron gates, and not glass doors or windows.

He said he had ordered the Regional Internal Affairs Service (RIAS) to request video footage of the incident and identify the policemen who employed excessive force.

"We will get their side to [allow them to] explain their actions based on their individual judgment. Some of what they did was not part of their orders," he said.

Dulay said he would not be able to say how many policemen were involved until RIAS had finished reviewing the footages.

But in an interview with ANC television, he said "probably five" would be investigated.

The policemen involved can expect the backing of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"We will defend the Regional Mobile Group men who entered the Iloilo capitol. Adequate pro-

tection will be given to them," Gonzalez said.

Not at the scene

On Thursday, Commission on Human Rights Chair Purificacion Quisumbing said an inquiry would be conducted to determine if rights violations were committed during the assault.

But Gonzalez said: "The problem with the CHR is they just watched television; they were not at the scene and have no basis [for their statements]."

Gonzalez said the order for police to enter the Iloilo capitol was made by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and not by him as alleged.

He also said the order was given because of information that released prisoners and New People's Army rebels were inside the capitol at the time.

But Tupas yesterday denied this, saying: "That is a lie. People inside the capitol were not armed with weapons, only with rosaries."

The governor also said his lawyers were considering filing charges against police who took part in the assault.

He said that when the assault team entered the capitol, firearms were thrown on the ground. "It's a good thing none of my supporters picked them up," he said.

Tupas claimed that there were plans to raid his house to search for firearms.

"There are no firearms in my house and I am not afraid of any raid," he said, but added that he would not put it past the raiders to plant firearms to make it appear like he owned them.

PNP task force

The leadership of the Philippine National Police is sending its own fact-finding task force to Iloilo to look into the Wednesday incident.

PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said the fact-finding

team would be headed by Director Edgardo Doromal, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Calderon said Doromal had been given two weeks to conduct the inquiry and submit recommendations.

Doromal is under orders to identify all the policemen involved in the operation, to determine their culpability for any violation of police procedures, and to recommend sanctions.

"The task force will examine the alleged overkill or excessive use of force during the operation. Based on their findings and recommendations, we will [impose] sanctions on those found liable under the law," Calderon said.

He said he particularly wanted to know the identities of the policemen who poked their guns at civilians and those who caused injury to Tupas supporters.

He also said the task force would determine Dulay's culpability, if any.

'Continuing cooperation'

Interior Secretary Puno said he welcomed the planned CHR inquiry into the Wednesday assault.

"We have a continuing cooperation with the CHR on all human rights issues in the PNP and in the [Department of Interior and Local Government] as a whole," Puno told the INQUIRER.

Puno has defended the police action to barge into the Iloilo capitol with drawn rifles, citing intelligence reports that Tupas had armed supporters inside the building.

But he said yesterday: "We welcome [the CHR] investigation and look forward to their assessment of our police operating procedures in general and as applied to the Iloilo case, so that we can improve such as may be deemed appropriate."

Puno maintained that the police were acting on lawful orders

when they entered the capitol.

"There were no shots fired, there was no serious injury," he said. "Overall, it was a successful operation."

Nonetheless, Puno encouraged the filing of complaints against those policemen who might have violated the rules of engagement.

He said any violation would be investigated by the PNP internal affairs service and then raised to the National Police Commission.

'Simple terrorism'

Lawmakers added their voices to the outrage over the assault on the Iloilo capitol.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, like Governor Tupas a member of the Liberal Party, backed moves by the Senate to look into the incident, saying: "To me, this is simple terrorism. And the casualty is the damage being inflicted on institutions and institutional processes. This is an attempt to sow fear among the administration's opposition and critics."

Sen. Franklin Drilon, LP president, has said he would file a resolution asking the committees on public order and local governments to inquire into the assault team's "excessive use of force."

Drilon chairs the committee on public order, and Sen. Alfredo Lim, the committee on local governments.

Speaker Jose de Venecia told the INQUIRER that lawmen "should be more gentle in the application of the law."

Asked if Malacañang through the DILG had used excessive force in storming Tupas' office, the Speaker said: "That seems to be the case."

He expressed support for a bipartisan resolution being prepared by the House calling for a congressional inquiry and the immediate relief of policemen who had carried out the assault. *With reports from Norman Bordadora, TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac*

Bishop laments rising number of 'celeb' bets

From page A1

public office.

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, chair of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Commission on Public Affairs, expressed alarm over the Filipinos' predisposition to vote for celebrities, without taking into consideration if they are qualified for the post.

He said there was nothing to be happy about when it comes to the performance of show biz personalities currently in public office.

Celebs disappoint

"I can say that at present, we are disappointed with those who were voted into office because they're celebrities," Iñiguez told reporters yesterday.

The bishop was asked to comment on the possibility that more celebrities could join the May congressional and local elections.

As it is, the Senate already has active "show biz" people like Senators Lito Lapid, Jinggoy Estrada and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr.

Lapid, a former Pampanga governor, starred in a movie, "Tatlong Baraha," in the recently concluded Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF). The film also featured Lapid's son, Mark, the incumbent Pampanga governor once linked to television personality Kris Aquino.

Iñiguez said voters should be more discerning in choosing candidates for public office.

"We should be alarmed that voters put a heavy premium on

celebrities," he said in Filipino.

Voters are distracted by the celebrities' popularity, the bishop observed, and tend to forget the more important issues such as a candidate's fitness to hold public office.

'Pinoy Voters Academy'

"They don't give much thought to whether the candidates have the qualifications to perform well in the position they are seeking," he said. "We really need to promote voter education."

This early, two church-based groups have initiated separate campaigns to educate voters in the coming elections.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) earlier launched a strategy called "Pinoy Voters Academy," which would go around the country helping voters develop a critical eye for the qualified candidate.

Lessons will be based primarily on the "10 Commandments for Responsible Voting," which includes an item warning citizens not to vote for candidates with questionable moral integrity.

The other day, the Philippine Bible Society released its own set of criteria for choosing candidates for public office.

The PBS, a group composed of Catholic and evangelical church leaders, said candidates should be "God-fearing, industrious, righteous, generous, true to their word, impartial, have integrity, display genuine concern and love for the country, have the ability to lead, and manage their own family."

Romulo joins Kissinger firm

FORMER FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Roberto R. Romulo has joined an international strategic advisory firm headed by former US secretary of state and Nobel laureate Henry Kissinger and former White House chief of staff Thomas R. McLarty III.

Kissinger McLarty Associates (KMA) announced in Washington, D.C. the appointment of Romulo as a member of its Board of Counselors.

"Mr. Romulo was a respected and effective diplomat and he will join a select group of counselors who help us best understand events and challenges around the world," said Dr. Kissinger, the firm's chair.

Following his appointment, Romulo met and informed President Macapagal-Arroyo last week that he could no longer serve as Senior Adviser on International Competitiveness on account of potential conflict of interest.

Romulo has agreed, however, to continue helping the Arroyo administration, particularly in promoting foreign investments in the country.

KMA counsels corporations in the US and overseas on strategic planning, market access, mergers and acquisitions, corporate communications, and political and risk issues worldwide.

Politics seen weighing down RP economy in 2007

ELECTIONS FOR THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS this year could damage the economy, jeopardizing an improvement in government finances and denting investor confidence, officials and business leaders said on yesterday.

But polls in May could undo much of the gains, they said.

'Stressful year'

"It will be a stressful year," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told a seminar organized by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

"We are likely to have a budget in 2007 which will allow for a higher level of spending so we have to make sure the revenues are there to support it."

Analysts are keen for the Philippines to increase capital spending in 2007 after years of enforced belt-tightening have left the country's transport network, technical facilities, hospitals and schools in a decrepit state.

Fearful

But economists are fearful local and congressional polls will encourage overspending and corruption by tax collectors that could revive yawning budget deficits and destroy any

hopes of a credit rating upgrade this year.

Past elections have been mired by violence, including bomb attacks and shootouts over lucrative local seats. A repeat of such violence this year could deter investors.

"We have to be clear that, in foreign investors' joint of view, that politics will rule throughout this year," Henry Schumacher, head of the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, said.

Election risk

A senior central bank official said late on Thursday that the monetary authority was unlikely to cut interest rates in the next few months because the elections could inflame inflation as politicians disburse cash, food and favors for votes.

The official, who declined to be identified, poured cold water over a market view that the central bank would cut its key borrowing rate in the first quarter.

"I doubt it. There are still risks remaining," he said.

Bitter affair

Thousands of local seats, half of the 24-seat Senate and all of the 235-member House of Representatives are up for grabs in May and

the election is shaping up to be a bitterly fought affair.

Although her position is not up for grabs, President Macapagal-Arroyo's hold on power could be at risk if her allies in the lower house lose their majority, clearing the way for a possible successful impeachment attempt against her.

Arroyo has failed to shake allegations she cheated in the 2004 presidential election and politicians and industry chiefs have warned the Philippines must hold trustworthy polls this year.

Test for RP

"The May elections have taken on exceptional importance, not

only because electoral results will have grave repercussions in policy making, but because they are now seen—at home and abroad—as a test of our capability to hold credible elections," Senator Richard Gordon said.

"If we meet the test, we all win. Fail it, and we all lose, and that includes the country's economic momentum."

Reuters

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'I'm Art Buchwald and I just died'

From page A1

as a Paris stringer for the US show business publication *Variety*, had a leg removed due to complications from diabetes in January 2006. He entered a Washington hospice the next month, refusing to continue dialysis treatment for his failing kidneys and effectively signing his own death warrant.

But even as he slid slowly toward death, Buchwald continued to serve up regular newspaper doses of the biting humor that in 1982 earned him a Pulitzer Prize, the top prize in US journalism, for outstanding commentary.

And he proclaimed he was going to enjoy what he called his "last hurrah" as he defied the doctors' original three-week survival prognosis.

'Who Art in Heaven'

On March 30, he wrote under the headline "Who Art (not quite) in Heaven": "When you are in a hospice, you get a chance to sleep a lot..."

"I have this recurring dream. I am at (Washington's) Dulles Airport, and I have a reservation to go to heaven. I go into the terminal and look at the list of flights. Heaven is at the last gate."

A few weeks later, he was still alive, writing: "What went wrong?"

On Thursday, in a video tribute posted on *The New York Times*, Buchwald himself opens the segment saying: "Hi, I'm Art Buchwald, and I just died."

Asked in the obituary inter-

view what was the meaning of his life, he replies: "I haven't figured it out. If I want to give myself any kind of thought, it's that I was put on Earth to make people laugh."

"If you can make people laugh, you get all the love you want," he said in the video, filmed at his summer home in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in July 2006.

Asked what he would like his legacy to be, he says: "I think I want to be remembered as somebody who made people laugh, feel better."

Most syndicated columnist

Buchwald was born on Oct. 20, 1925, in Mount Vernon, New York.

After military service in World War II, he attended the University of Southern California, where he became editor of a college magazine. He was refused a degree because he lacked a high school diploma.

He headed to Paris, where he became a stringer for *Variety*, but his talent was soon spotted and he began writing the "Paris After Dark" column for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

Buchwald worked as a syndicated columnist for the *Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Tribune Media Services* from 1952 until his death. At one stage, he was the most syndicated columnist in the world.

"He saw the world for what it was. He never let the rest of us forget what it was, and he made us laugh as he did it. He stripped the skin off the world, and he had a great time doing

it," said International Herald Tribune managing editor Michael Oreskes.

An original

"It's a tremendous loss," said David Williams, president and chief executive of Tribune Media Services. "Very seldom does an individual come onto the journalism stage and perform at such a high level for such an extended period."

"Art's commentaries graced the pages of newspapers around the world for more than 50 years," he added. "He was an original. We won't see his like again anytime soon."

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger heaped praises on his late friend.

"Art faced his long and difficult illness with the same extraordinary courage and good humor that he displayed throughout his storied life," he said. "He not only made everyone laugh until the end, he was an inspiration to us all."

Wrote 30 books

Buchwald wrote more than 30 books, including "I'll Always Have Paris." The memoir of his years in France offered a colorful account of cafe life with the likes of Ernest Hemingway and Allen Ginsberg, and interviews with stars such as Elvis Presley.

He returned to the United States in 1962 to write columns for *The Washington Post* and dozens of other newspapers, specializing in political satire.

Buchwald will be cremated and his ashes will be buried in Martha's Vineyard, next to his wife, with whom he had three children, his son said. A memorial service was also planned. **AFP**

Judge orders Leviste released on bail

By Tarra Quismundo

AFTER A WEEK OF BEING under round-the-clock police watch, former Batangas Gov. Antonio "Tony" Leviste was ordered freed by a Makati judge, setting the stage for his arraignment on Jan. 24 on charges of killing a trusted aide during an office quarrel.

Police pulled out of the seventh floor of the Makati Medical Center, where Leviste is confined, after Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Elmo Alameda issued the release order late on Thursday.

Leviste is charged with homicide for the death of Rafael de las Alas, who was shot several times in Leviste's office last week.

Leviste's lawyers have posted a cash bail of P40,000 for his release.

"With the release order, I think [Leviste] will no longer stay that long in the hospital," one of Leviste's lawyers, Alex Avisado Jr., said yesterday. "The doctor is right now determining his condition, trying to evaluate if he can

already be discharged."

Avisado earlier said Leviste would pursue the line of self-defense. De las Alas' family claimed murder.

Makati City prosecutors filed the homicide charge based on a report by the police which gave weight to a statement by a witness who reported hearing a heated argument between the two shortly before the shooting.

Inquest prosecutor Henry Salazar found an absence of treachery and premeditation—two elements that would qualify a case as one of murder—in the evidence submitted by the police.

Family to appeal

De las Alas' family has contended that Leviste should be charged with murder, saying the circumstances suggested that the shooting was not a spur-of-the-moment act.

Joven Lorenzo, counsel for the De las Alas family, said his clients would appeal the police findings before the justice department.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales

said the other day he had ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the killing. He said that based on the number of shots fired, "it looks like it's not homicide."

De las Alas sustained five gunshot wounds, including one on his left forearm, three in the face, and one just above his nape.

Doctors' reputation

Leviste has been confined at the Makati hospital since Jan. 12, the day the shooting occurred on the ninth floor of the LPL Towers on Legaspi Street in Makati.

Although "under arrest" at the time, Leviste was not placed in a detention cell as doctors advised him to stay in the hospital because of hypertension and his long-known heart condition.

Avisado dismissed doubts about Leviste's condition, saying the former governor's doctors "will not stake their reputation on their findings that he should continue [to be in] confinement" in the hospital.

Victim pushed Leviste on ...

From page A1

his friend, who had been part of his team of advisers on economics, business, legal and political affairs since the 1970s.

Intervening issue

"That's why I really feel bad about this tragedy," Avila said. "Ka Paeng was Tony's shadow, they were more than brothers."

Avila said he had worked with both Leviste and De las Alas since the 1990s and had seen the "love-hate" relationship that Leviste seemed to cultivate with De las Alas, as well as with his other professional and business associates.

"Tony has a short temper. He would explode even on small matters, and there would be

shouting matches, followed by *tanpuhan*. Then it's forgotten," said Avila, who admitted he also had a "love-hate" relationship with Leviste.

"If what they are saying was that the shooting was the result of a buildup of hatred, that was impossible because there were frequent outbursts," Avila said. "They've been loving and hating each other for so long. It could have been triggered by an intervening issue."

Always together

A scion of a wealthy, landed clan in Batangas, Leviste made a name in real estate in the '60s. He reportedly met De las Alas for the first time at the Philippine Housing and Homes Corp. (PHHC), a

government housing agency.

When he resigned from the PHHC to run for vice governor of Batangas in 1972, Leviste took along De las Alas with him. De las Alas would become his all-around adviser at the Provincial Capitol.

Leviste was governor of Batangas until 1980.

After politics, Leviste brought De las Alas with him to Jalco (Jose Antonio Leviste Corp.), where De las Alas "had a say" on corporate matters, Avila said.

According to the source who preferred to be anonymous, Leviste had trusted De las Alas enough to name him director or a nominee in the companies under Jalco, the holding firm of Leviste's financial and business investments.

Outsourcing business seen to earn \$12B by 2010

From page A1

jobs like engineering design" than just call-center operations, he said.

"We also offer competitive labor costs at 15 percent to 30 percent of salaries in the United States, Japan and Singapore," he said.

Business Process Association of the Philippines president Dan Reyes said game development was the industry's most promising subsector.

Game development

The Department of Trade and Industry has listed the game development industry as its seventh BPO subsector after contact center services, back-office (human resource, finance and accounting, administrative services), medical transcription, computer graphics/animation, software development and engineering design.

Officials said Philippine companies were capable of providing outsourced game production services like animation, graphic design, character devel-

opment, programming and design to large Western and Japanese game developers and publishers.

Favila noted yesterday that the Game Development Association of the Philippines, the industry group, was joining the annual e-Services Philippines for the first time.

The GDAP has 15 member companies that employ some 200 game developers skilled in animation and design that US and Japanese clients seek.

The Philippines is struggling to catch up with India, the undisputed leader in the sector, as a center for global business process outsourcing.

Favila cited GENPACT, a member of the General Electric group of companies that has established an 800-seat call center here which they hope to expand to 3,000 employees in the coming years.

Global market niche

Other companies like Dell, Microsoft and Ericsson have also established back office oper-

ations here and are looking at expanding in the future, he added.

Reyes said there were 244,675 workers employed in BPO operations, mostly in customer care, back office and software development service providers.

Revenues in 2006 are projected at \$3.63 billion, or 50 percent more than the \$2.42 billion posted in 2005.

Reyes said the industry expected significant increases in jobs in medical transcription and back-office services.

He said Filipinos were also creating a niche in the global animation market.

Swedish firm Ericsson Philippines announced it would expand its shared services in the country.

Ericsson's local shared services center, the only one outside Sweden, handles accounts-payable processing of Ericsson firms all over the world.

The company intends to more than triple its employees from the current 70 accountants.

PCGG OKs P1.9B SMC funds but use unclear

From page A1

from the forced tax that the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos imposed on coconut farmers between 1973 and 1982 ostensibly to develop the industry but which were pillaged by Marcos and his cronies to enrich themselves.

Public funds

The CIIF, a group of 14 holding companies owned by six oil mills that held the numerous assets—including the San Miguel Corp. shares—acquired by Marcos and his cronies with the use of the coco levy funds, was sequestered by the PCGG in 1986.

After the Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that the coco levy funds were *prima facie* public funds, and the Sandiganbayan declared in 2003 the levy funds were public funds held by government in trust for the country's coconut farmers, control of the CIIF and the 27 percent San Miguel shares went to the PCGG. But until the decisions become final, these assets remain under sequestration.

The ownership of another 20 percent block of San Miguel controlled by Marcos crony and San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco is still under dispute.

Explaining the opinion issued by the OSG, Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura said the PCGG and the CIIF can utilize the San Miguel dividends even though they are still under sequestration as long as their use was within the CIIF framework, meaning for the interest of coconut farmers.

A source from the OSG office revealed that an unnamed government agency had requested the solicitor general's opinion to facilitate the PCGG resolution.

Unclear purpose

A coconut industry official, who did not want to be named, questioned the PCGG's decision to touch the CIIF dividends for an unclear purpose, particularly during an election year.

The official said that while the government could claim to use the money for the development of coconut plantations in keeping

with the CIIF's charter, he feared that the money could be diverted, like the fertilizer funds that were allegedly funneled into the campaign kitty of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies in the 2004 polls.

Nario and Nachura denied speculations that the PCGG resolution approving the use of the CIIF dividend funds was related to the coming elections.

Two years ago, the then head of the Philippine Coconut Administration, Evangeline Valbuena, raised a media tempest when she denounced a plan to put up an P8.4-billion hybrid coconut nursery project in 110,000 hectares of land in Agusan del Sur.

The project was to have been jointly funded by the PCA, the CIIF oil mills group and the United Coconut Planters Bank's Cofinance. The issue became quickly controversial as Valbuena claimed that coco levy funds were to be used. It led to a Senate investigation and the firing of Valbuena. The project fell through.

Marines in Garci scandal moved ...

From page A1

controversy in 2005 after some of its key officers defied military orders to shut up and spoke about poll irregularities before the Senate.

At least one of its senior officers was later accused of involvement in a supposed plot by some military groups last year to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The transfer order came as the political climate began to heat up ahead of midterm elections in May.

Navy and Marine officials denied the brigade's pullout was related to the coming polls.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. ordered the pullout of the brigade from Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte provinces, to switch places with the 103rd Army Infantry Brigade.

Oplan Ultimatum

Navy spokesperson Cmdr. Giovanni Bacorda said the brigade's pullout from the Lanao area was part of the military's Oplan Ultimatum to finish off the Abu Sayyaf group.

"Politics or the elections have nothing to do with this," he said.

The announcement of the 1st Marine Brigade's transfer coincided with testimony by CIA Director Michael Hayden at the US Congress praising the Philippines for its fight against terrorists.

Hayden told US lawmakers the Philippine government and Armed Forces had worked closely with the United States to decrease the threat from terrorists.

'A success story'

Hayden said US-Philippine cooperation had "contributed greatly to strengthening the capacity of the Philippine Armed Forces and the Philippine security services."

"In terms of what intelligence and military power can do, it's done it in this part of the global war" against terror, Hayden said at a House of Representatives Intelligence Committee hearing.

Rep. Todd Tiahrt said the United States had "trained the Philippine military, and we've given them tools necessary to

make that country safer. And this is a success story."

Consolidating Marine forces

Philippine Navy chief Vice Adm. Rogelio Calunsag said the 1st Marine Brigade, headed by Col. Ramiro Alivio, would be deployed to Basilan next week.

Calunsag told reporters the transfer was part of the Navy's thrust to improve Fleet-Marine operations by consolidating Marine forces in the island provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, which are known bailiwicks of the Abu Sayyaf.

"This is all geared toward consolidating the Marines in one area (so) we can amplify the Fleet-Marine concept of operations that we have in the Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi area," Calunsag said.

The 1st Brigade will join two other Marine brigades that are in the thick of pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf rebels in Sulu. This has resulted in the recent deaths of several Abu Sayyaf leaders, including senior leader Abu Sulaiman and possibly of their chieftain, Khadaffy Janjalani.

Soldiers of the Navy

The latest encounter in Patikul last Thursday resulted in nine Abu Sayyaf deaths, not 10 as earlier reported by the military. Three soldiers were killed in the encounter, bringing to 11 the Marine casualties in recent clashes.

The 3rd Marine Brigade, headed by Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, was originally based in Sulu while the 2nd Marine Brigade under Brig. Gen. Cesario Atienza was deployed to Sulu last December from Lanao del Norte.

Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga said the Basilan-Sulu-Tawi-Tawi islands were "suited" to a Fleet-Marine tandem.

"The Navy has the boats, and we are the soldiers of the Navy," he said.

Seaborne operations

Calunsag said that with the latest move, "we will consolidate the command and control of the Marine forces so they will now be under the combined naval force of the Navy."

"This was difficult in the past because some of the Marine troops were in central Mindanao. There were logistical problems in the support system," he said.

Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said the pullout of the brigade was "a welcome development" for the troops.

"We are looking forward to more competent seaborne operations" with the Navy units, he said.

AFP commended

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former Marine, praised the military for the transfer of the 1st Marine Brigade.

"I've been asking for it so that the tactical integrity of all Marines would be preserved. That's a basic principle in military. The Marines should be held responsible for one contiguous area. The Marines become more effective if they have tactical integrity," he said in a phone interview.

"I commend the AFP for doing that."

Biazon rejected suggestions that the transfer was related to the coming elections.

"No, I don't think so," he said.

Valuable ally

Malacañang welcomed the praises heaped by US officials on the Philippine government's success in the fight against terrorism.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Arroyo administration would continue "to do its share."

"The recent (antiterror) pact among Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries and the recent successes of the AFP in the battlefield illustrate the country's commitment not only locally but also regionally in addressing this scourge," Bunye said.

He also said: "We look at the US as a valuable ally and partner which provides us valuable training and intelligence information."

Bunye also said the successes being reaped by the military in its hunt for terrorists "are a clear indication that the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah are nearing the end of the line." **TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño**

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0125 Series of 200

ISSN
0116-2642PHILIPPINE
DAILY
INQUIRER

Vol. 22 No. 43

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://inquirer.net

Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at:
 • Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascarido Sts., Makati City
 • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
 • Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
 • Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 • Advertising 897-4807
 • Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-0234
 • Subscription Hotline 896-6000



Team players

IT WAS ALL A CHARADE, JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez said. But if it was, then every Filipino should shudder at the thought of what the real thing would be.

Gonzalez was talking of the assault launched by the Philippine National Police on the Iloilo Capitol last Wednesday to evict Gov. Niel Tupas, who had earlier been dismissed by the Office of the Ombudsman for alleged graft and corruption. Tupas had tearfully vowed to hang on to his post, saying he was "ready to offer my life to stand by my principles and the rights of the people." Gonzalez said the sympathies of the PNP regional director, Chief Supt. Wilfredo Dulay, were actually with Tupas, as the justice secretary noted that the police kept postponing the deadline for the governor to leave his office. "It was a charade, not a raid, on the part of the police just to show they were complying with orders," he said.

The charade or "sympathetic" maneuver was there for the Filipino people to see on national television. It showed 200 policemen in combat gear and with rifles drawn breaking down padlocked doors to get to the governor who was holed up in his office. As provincial government employees and Tupas' supporters protested, the policemen shoved them back and pointed rifles at some of them. A few of them suffered bruises, including the governor's son, Niel Jr., a member of the provincial board.

Several lawmakers denounced the "use of excessive force" in the storming of the capitol, with Sen. Franklin Drilon, who is himself from Iloilo, saying the storming of the Capitol was "completely unjustified." Sen. Edgardo Angara said the law enforcers had committed a "lawless" act. Commission on Human Rights Chair Purificacion Quisumbing described what happened as "very shocking." The policemen looked as if "they were ready to shoot," she noted.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno conceded that "there were very disturbing footage of the clearing operations." But apparently that was all he was concerned about: the images of needless violence getting into the news. Otherwise, he was all praises for the assault team, saying it had accomplished its mission. "I did not see any deployment of unnecessary force," he said. "There were no serious injuries. No shots were fired."

Spoken like a card-carrying member of a team that counts human rights violations only in terms of heads bashed or dead bodies turning up—and sometimes not even those things. After all, this is an administration that has elevated to policy the denial of various democratic rights guaranteed by the Constitution through such instances as the "calibrated preemptive response" and last year's proclamation of a state of national emergency, which was immediately followed by a crackdown on street protests and media organizations it deemed to be unfriendly. And when it comes to human rights, just about everyone in the Arroyo administration seems to be one in thinking that they should not have been there at all, but since they are there, they can be ignored when political exigencies require it.

The justice secretary thinks it is nothing but a game to have policemen point their rifles at unarmed civilians and storm the seat of government in his own province. The interior secretary believes such an overwhelming show of force is a perfectly legitimate method the police can employ to carry out lawful orders. Both are just taking their cue from President Macapagal-Arroyo. In fact, Puno merely aped his boss when he suggested that the policemen deserved commendation, not condemnation, for what they did at the Iloilo Capitol. The President had led the way in thumbing her nose at human rights when she singled out for praise, during her State of the Nation Address last year, the military officer who was widely denounced as the "butcher" of leftist activists, Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan.

No doubt, all three of them make up a solid team. But what a sordid and violent game they play.

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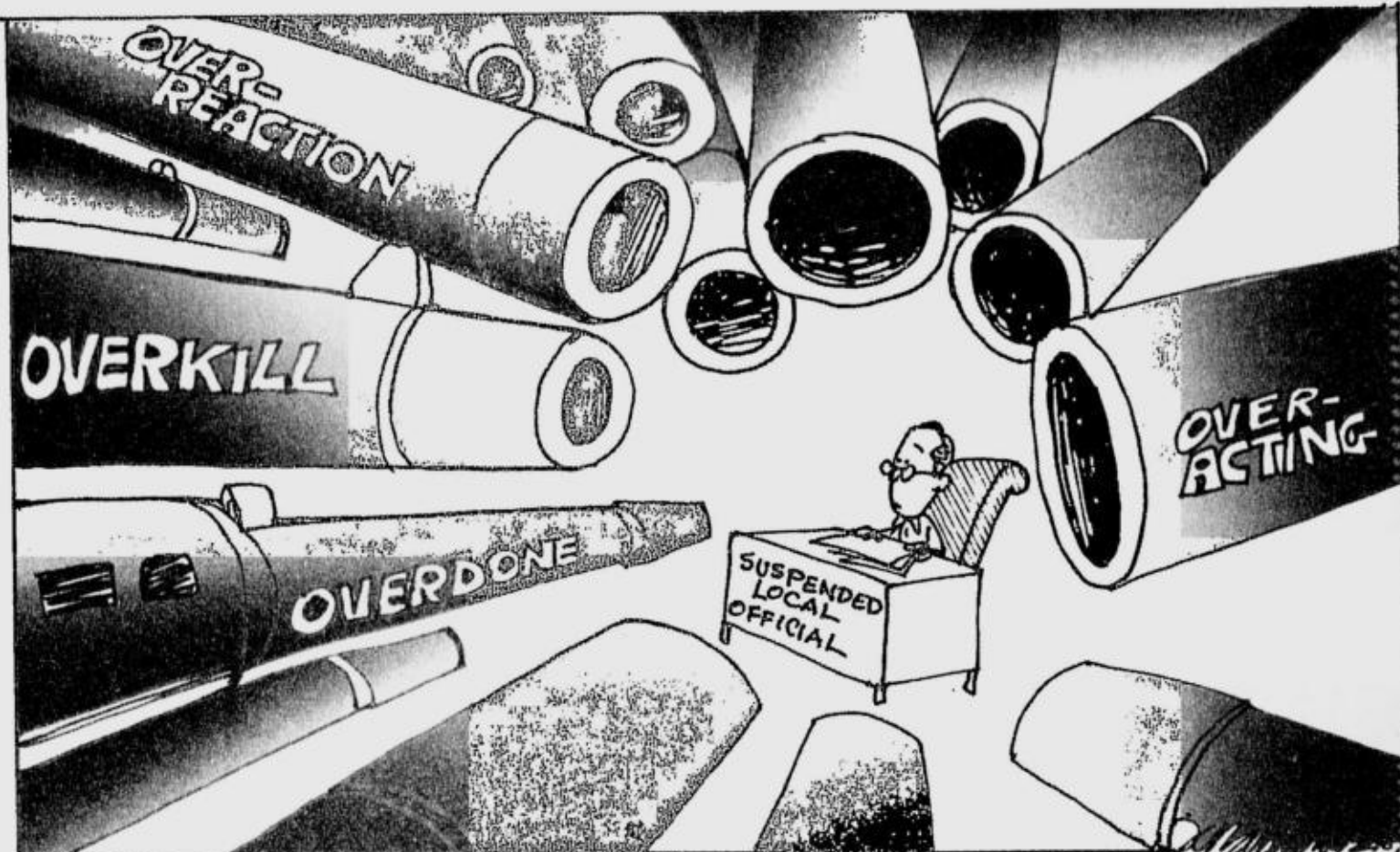
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Political dynasties

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS POLICIES of the present Constitution is expressed in its Art. II, Sec. 26, which says, "The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law." It is also the most ignored by Congress for obvious reasons.

The framers left it to Congress to define "political dynasties"—which it has not—but I suppose the people understood what the phrase meant when they ratified the Constitution in 1987. They knew that certain families so controlled their constituents—by guns or gold or, in some cases, merit—as to be able to retain political power, to the exclusion of other candidates. By transferring elective positions among themselves, from one relative to another, often regardless of qualifications, they are able to prevent other citizens, including the more qualified ones, from enjoying "equal access to opportunities for public service."

Why the Constitutional Commission did not see fit to define and prohibit political dynasties itself is worth pondering, but uselessly. The fact is that the provision is not self-executing but needs legislative implementation to be really effective. The prohibition in the said section can be enforced only if "political dynasties" is defined, unfortunately not by the Commission but by Congress. As the rule now stands, it is only an empty aspiration of the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, disdainfully disregarded and therefore violated by Congress.

What makes the transgression especially vicious is its encouragement by another brainstorm of the Constitution providing for term limits for elective officials from the President down. To retain his political hold on his constituents, a forcibly retired official arranges to have his wife, a *querida*, one of his children, his own brother or sister, or a parent to occupy his

position for one term, after which he will be qualified to run again for his accustomed office.

This has become an accepted dodge of the constitutional aversion against political dynasties that continue to exist and even grow against the toothless prohibition. The substitute is usually a token caretaker only for the retired family member who actually still pulls the strings and retains his hold on his constituents during his disqualification. The anomaly is usually compounded if the "front" is inept, with little political experience or credible credentials for the position he or she is holding for the real political kingpin.

Although its evils are readily recognizable, the political dynasty may not really be easy to define. Should it be limited to the immediate family only or may it extend to other relatives, by consanguinity or affinity, within the fourth civil degree under the Civil Code? This is a question that may be offered by Congress as its excuse for not defining the political dynasty. But the real reason, of course, is the refusal of its members to commit political suicide by applying their prohibition to themselves.

In fairness, there are some persons with acknowledged abilities who may be considered members of a political dynasty and thus be unfairly disqualified from public service. One example would be Sergio Osmeña Jr., a worthy public official in his own right, who might have been disqualified for being the son of his

illustrious father. And might Manuel Roxas II be also excluded for being the son of Gerardo Roxas who was the son of a former President? The credentials of this family are unquestionable.

Without making any judgment on the effects of such temporary substitutions on the public welfare, I will mention some current or recent evasions of the policy against political dynasties. In Makati City, Jejomar Binay finished three terms as mayor, was succeeded by his wife for one term, and then returned to his former post. MMDA chief Bayani Fernando also retired as mayor of Marikina City, where his wife now sits in his place. Ben Hur Abalos replaced his father, now Comelec chair, as mayor of Mandaluyong City. In Las Piñas City, Nene Aguilar was succeeded by his wife as mayor, and Manuel Villar, a member by affinity of his wife's clan, was replaced by her in the House of Representatives when he became a senator.

There are now two Estradas in the Senate and another relative of Joseph Estrada is eyeing the same chamber on the strength mainly of his father's name. JV Ejercito will campaign for his mother to succeed him as mayor of San Juan, but Jinggoy Estrada, who also served in that position is pushing for his wife. Pia Cayetano expects her brother Alan, and Nene Pimentel his bar topnotcher son, to be in the Senate too. Lito Atienza is finishing his last term as mayor of Manila and wants his son Ali to replace him. There are more examples in the lower House, many of them too odious to remember.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air," like many qualified Filipinos who can improve the public service but are barred from doing so by the powerful political dynasties. The Constitution does not directly check them, Congress will not do it, but the voters can—and should.

Irony of gov't stance on Smith custody issue

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



and the DOJ are looking forward to discussions with the embassy on the arrangements for the confinement/detention of Smith et al.

In other words, the DFA was saying that per various provisions of the VFA, (1) it has primary right of jurisdiction (which it was exercising); (2) the United States should have formally asked for initial custody over Smith et al., which it failed to do; (3) the case being extraordinary in nature (rape being a heinous crime), the Philippine authorities wanted custody over the soldiers; and (4) the DFA and DOJ would be discussing with the US Embassy a mutually agreeable arrangement for that custody (under the Philippine authorities) consistent with item (3).

It is noteworthy that the US Embassy, according to Bruselas, "chose not to respond to the DFA's Note Verbale No. 05-2579," while it took two months (and a follow-up) to respond to Note Verbale No. 05-2662. Talk about foot-dragging.

What was in the much-delayed US Embassy response? That "having taken full account of the position of the government of the Philippines regarding custody, the US Government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings, as provided for by Article V, paragraph 6 of the Visiting Forces Agreement."

Thus did the US Embassy ignore the DFA's references to what Bruselas identifies as paragraphs 1a, 2a and 3a of the same Article V, which recognizes Philippine jurisdiction, exclusive jurisdiction and primary right to

exercise jurisdiction; and paragraph 4, which provides that "Within the scope of their legal competence, the authorities of the Philippines and the United States shall assist each other in the arrest of United States personnel in the Philippines and in handing them over to the authorities who are to exercise jurisdiction in accordance with the provisions of this article." (Underscoring supplied by Bruselas, who pointed out quite reasonably that the reference to "authorities" had to be the Philippine authorities, who, per previous paragraphs, have jurisdiction.)

Cavalier behavior, indeed. And selective too—adhering to a certain (one) provision of Article V while ignoring all the others that the DFA had cited in its notes verbale.

Still, indicating its resolve, the DFA persevered. After it received the two-month delayed US response, it fired off another Note Verbale (06-0103), reiterating and expounding the positions it took in its previous notes verbale: it wanted custody of Smith et al. It also complained, declaring that "the Philippine Government is seriously concerned over the patent disparity in the treatment of US military personnel in other countries on the issue of custody in criminal cases." How did it show this serious concern? "The Department of Foreign Affairs wishes to continue discussions on this matter between the Philippine Government and the United States Government."

Barely a year later, the DFA and DOJ changed their stance. Consider the irony: pressing for custody when guilt was still in doubt, and then giving up custody when guilt was already established in the trial court.

If this volte-face is an example of their behavior with the US Embassy on previous occasions, then it is no wonder that they are treated cavalierly and with contempt. And they in turn, treat our courts cavalierly and with contempt. And our courts (the Court of Appeals, for sure) take it. For shame.

Insanity in Senate

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



Two articles about the Cebu Summits reflect today's geopolitical reality. In the International Herald Tribune's op-ed page last Tuesday, Philip Bowring noted that the successive summits in Cebu were notable for the absence of "the US of A." Bowring said this has served to underscore "how far America's preoccupation with the Middle East has weakened its role in East Asia" and that it comes "at the very time (when) many would welcome more US engagement to balance the rise of China." He noted Asean's strong commitment to accelerate an "Asean Community" by 2015, which is bolstered by the trade deal it cut with China for that same year. To Bowring, what China offers Asean may not really go beyond its World Trade Organization commitments, but it "further enhances China's leadership role," to the disadvantage of the United States and Japan. He concluded that the Cebu events have made it all the more urgent for the WTO negotiations to succeed. For if they didn't, "East Asia may be in a better position than other regions to maintain momentum for liberalization"; in which case, "the role of the West in (the Asian) region will be further eroded."

Interestingly, Catherine Colonna, the French minister-delegate for European affairs, stressed in the Cebu Summits the same need for more interaction between the West and Asean. In an article published locally, she noted that France was the first European Union member to adhere to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia that was signed by Asean members in Bali 30 years after the Asean was founded. She said that with

this gesture, France wants to show that to ensure Asia's stability, we need to acknowledge the role not only of all the players on the continent (China, India and Japan), "but also the regional organizations." She noted Asean's 550 million inhabitants and its status as one of the most dynamic regions in the world, where a third of world trade transits via the Malacca Strait. Colonna asserted that France cannot remain on the sidelines of "this new geopolitical landscape." But she stressed it's more than just France; a partnership between the EU and Southeast Asia is the "sole way" to attain full effectiveness, and she cited EU's participation, alongside the Asean countries, in the observation mission for the Aceh peace agreement in Indonesia as evidence of renewed interest by the EU.

I found these Western observations on the Asean very interesting, in view of the fact that never had I seen the lunches Speaker Jose de Venecia periodically hosts for foreign VIPs as jam-packed as that which he tendered last Tuesday at the Manila Hotel for Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's state visit. So crowded was it that waiters had to quickly add more tables, and some House members ended up sitting near the restaurant's entrance. Of course, it helped that he came with a load of goodies, such as \$1 billion to finance the rehabilitation of the NorthRail from Malolos to Clark, and of the SouthRail from Divisoria to Legazpi City in Bicol. This loan is in addition to the \$400 million that had earlier jump-started the NorthRail rehab project from Caloocan to Malolos, as well as the plethora of agricultural deals signed by Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap with ranking Chinese officials.

For the next two Sundays, Cecile Alvarez and I will interview, in our program over dzRH, Ambassador Marciano Paynor, secretary general of the national organizing committee for Asean (tomorrow, Jan. 21 at 9:15 p.m.) and acting Foreign Secretary Linda Basilio, who was the DFA's senior official for the Asean Summit (Jan. 28). The two will give insights into the summit that have never been disclosed before.

Respect and contempt

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



an ongoing hearing in the Court of Appeals.

IF anyone should ask why the Americans treat the South Koreans with so much respect, and Filipinos with nothing but contempt, we need only look at the contrasting behavior and attitudes of the two "host" governments.

While the South Koreans immediately moved to arrest the suspect and hold him in captivity, Filipino officials first tried to lose the rape case and impugn the victim, and then—frustrated by Judge Pozon's decision—bent over backwards to do the Americans' bidding. Where would Smith be, we must ask, if he had raped a South Korean instead of a Filipina?

Certainly, not in his quarters inside the Embassy building, from where—so the latest news goes—Smith will be temporarily moved to a converted container van inside the Embassy compound. Rusty or not, a converted container van sitting out in the open is still far less secure than a guarded building. If the US Embassy needs to remodel its premises, what's to stop officials from temporarily turning over Smith to Philippine authorities who can house him in much more secure quarters—Muntinlupa is my suggestion, as this is where convicted criminals are usually remanded.

THERE is another reason the United States was so quick to apologize to the people of South Korea and expressed willingness to "cooperate fully" with the local authorities.

It turns out that the alleged crime took place at a "sensitive time," with "Washington seeking help from Seoul to consolidate and relocate American

military bases in South Korea by 2008."

The South Korean defense ministry has already said it would not be able to complete the relocation but gave no new date for its completion, saying the delay has been caused by protests by local residents whose land has been taken over. There has also been a dispute over how to share the costs, estimated at over \$10 billion.

There has been an American military presence in South Korea since the armistice that ended the Korean War, almost 60 years ago. At present, some 29,000 US troops are based there.

With North Korea detonating a nuclear device and threatening the "balance of power" in Asia, American authorities may also feel maintaining their presence in the South is crucial. That may explain why mollifying Korean sentiments about the rape and assault was considered a priority.

THIS is not the first time that crimes involving US troops in South Korea have caused a wrinkle in the relations between the two countries. In 1992, the brutal murder of a South Korean bar girl triggered a wave of protests around the country. Ten years later, in 2002, the death of two South Korean middle-school girls in a traffic accident involving US armored vehicles also set off a series of candlelight protests.

The maintenance of bars and brothels with alleged links with American military authorities has also come under fire, especially with the proclamation by the US defense department that it was adopting a "zero tolerance" policy toward sexual solicitation by US troops posted abroad.

When US military bases were still to be found here, crimes committed by US servicemen against Filipinos occurred so frequently they became fairly routine. But the agreement between our two governments at that time allowed for an accused serviceman's superiors to just say the serviceman was "on duty" at that time, and he would invariably be spirited out of the country, out of reach of local police or judges.

We no longer have US bases here, but the arrangement is alive and well in the VFA.

politicians, whatever their age, to stay on their toes, anticipate new problems and remain open to new ideas aimed at addressing them. No one can keep himself ensconced in high office subject only to death or his own boredom. One-party systems, one-man charismatic dictatorships, or a mixture of the two, as in Tito's Yugoslavia, are a guarantee of sclerotic minds and inert governments.

So what will become of Cuba after Fidel departs?

Many observers portray Raúl Castro, Fidel's younger brother and designated heir, as a pragmatist—the "practical Castro." When Cuba's lavish Soviet subsidies vanished in the early 1990s, it was Raúl who recognized that the regime's survival required economic reforms, pressing to allow private agricultural markets to reopen in order to boost food production and stave off possible starvation.

However, this is the same man who, as the head of Cuba's internal security apparatus, for many years represented the knuckles of an iron-fisted regime, directly responsible for imprisoning—and often torturing—thousands of dissidents. So, perhaps, the best that could be hoped for is a Russian-style experiment with liberalization that is quickly called off by the regime's nervous Old Guard.

Moreover, with the support of oil-rich allies like Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez—and with the recent discovery of significant crude reserves off Cuba's own coast—introducing reforms could well become less urgent. In that case, Raúl may seek to cling grimly to the fossilized system that he helped build and maintain with such brutality.

But Raúl Castro is an old man himself, so we can hope for the prospect that some Deng or, better yet, a Suarez will ultimately emerge from the wreckage of Fidelism. But for now, younger communist officials, like Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, remain ideological hardliners whom many Cubans refer to as "los Talibán." If they take control and stick to their guns, Cuba could face another long biology lesson. *Project Syndicate*

Nina Khrushcheva is a professor of international affairs at New School University.

Solitary pleasure

I BELIEVE THAT WHEN MEN REACH A CERTAIN AGE, they choose a favorite chair in the bedroom or sala and spend the rest of their days sitting on it.

Six years ago, my Lolo came home from the United States. Every day after his arrival, he sat on a chair in his room. But when our sala was renovated last year, he began sitting there for most of the day.

Crossword puzzles take up most of my Lolo's time. He wakes up when his alarm clock tells him to, eats whenever his stomach grumbles and sleeps only when his eyelids hint at heaviness. He pleads to be brought to the mall at least five times a day.

When he cannot find someone to accompany him to the mall, when he does not feel hungry and he finds the puzzles boring, he indulges in a solitary pleasure: reminiscing about the past. But the moment an equally bored grandchild engages him in conversation, his solitary recollection ceases and he invites his grandchild to walk with him back to the days of his youth.

He was a guerrilla during the war with Japan. He was 24 and a medical student in Manila when he came home one day to find his boarding house emptied of people and belongings. All the students had gone back to their provinces to avoid being drafted into the army.

My Lolo was caught in Bataan, and he was forced to join the Death March. During the march, the Japanese soldiers never allowed them to have food or drink, not even a sip from the filth-laden canals by the road.

At some point, my Lolo who had already been weakened by malaria, lost consciousness. The Japanese thought he was dead and threw him into a pit filled with corpses. But a Filipino laborer who was digging his grave noticed Lolo's eyelids moving. When the Japanese soldiers were no longer looking, my Lolo was brought to safety. After a close brush with death, Lolo got a second chance to live.

I learned about my Lolo's best friend, after complaining about a certain "Piping" who often phoned and asked my Lolo. I was told Piping was his best friend from the time they were in college. But the fact is, Piping didn't just speak with Lolo, he shouted over the phone.

That was when I learned that when one gets old, his hearing ability weakens. He then believes that other people have the same problem, so he stops talking and starts shouting.

One day, I suddenly realized that I hadn't been answering calls from Piping for quite some time. I congratulated myself for knowing when to answer the phone and when to let my sister deal with the eccentricity and hearing problem of my Lolo's best friend. But the truth was, Piping had passed away.

When I was 10 years old, I met another friend of my Lolo. This man, who was our neighbor, told me and my sister that girls kept chasing Lolo when they were in college.

Some years later, when Lolo came home from the United States, I asked him if this story was true. But I need not have asked because quite often during conversations with his grandchildren, he would recall his romantic experiences and blame all his colorful past on the women. He was only a poor, cute guy who was too weak to resist and was overwhelmed by the women, he would say with a chuckle. Yeah, right.

During their golden wedding anniversary, Lolo and Lola danced to the tune of "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." And sometimes, as he pauses to ponder an answer to the crossword, I would hear him whistling the tune.

I suppose that when a man gets old, the music that nurtured his teenage soul stays with him. And for my Lolo, Frank Sinatra's songs are unforgettable.

When one gets old, he dips into his reservoir of memories and turns it into a river of stories, replete with remembrances of lovers and friends, *barkadas* and broken families, seven children and 24 grandchildren.

When one gets old, he dedicates his songs to Rose who was the first love, to Natividad who bore his first child, to Andrea with the beautiful body, and, finally, to Crispina, whose hands he held when they were young and tender and firm but which have now been toughened and wrinkled by half a century of marriage. And he will thank God for Piping who grew old and half-deaf with him and for the stranger who didn't finish digging his grave.

While one is young, he must live without remorse. He must drink life and "drain the cup to its dregs." He must dance in the rain on mountaintops and run against the ocean's waves. He must muddy himself in childhood soil and dine well at his wedding reception. He must seek the sting of medicine when he stumbles and wear his scars like badges and take the time to laugh at himself.

When one is young, he must involve himself with people not merely out of curiosity but out of concern. When a man is young, he must throw himself without reserve into the widespread arms of his God and know the bliss of surrender.

My Lolo has been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for nearly a decade now. His memory is fading. The reservoir has sprung leaks. These memories of his youth may just be among the last he can enjoy in solitary pleasure as he sits on his favorite chair day after day.

Katrina Marie A. Balmaceda, 19, is a third year media communication student at Saint Theresa's College, Cebu.

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THEY SAID

Puzzling inaction

"I'm puzzled why she has not acted on this measure, which is part of her 10-point agenda. When we passed this measure, I didn't hear her say, 'I'm glad we're going to have automated elections.' She should have signed it right away. It will boost her credibility."

—Sen. Richard Gordon, urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to sign into law the Congress-approved legislation to automate elections

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AFTER THE ASEAN GALA DINNER AT MACTAN Shangri-la Hotel last Jan. 14, I ran into Senate President Manuel Villar. I asked him about the "third force" he's said to be forming. I noted that in various pre-Edsa elections, the third force usually ended up third. He said a third force indeed becomes third if it's weak, but if it's strong, then it becomes the front-runner. But he refused to disclose his plans as yet, as doing so makes running "more expensive." What about reelectionist Joker Arroyo? Villar said their group is still trying to convince him to run again. Obviously, senators who ran with the administration in 2001 don't want to do so again, and yet, some of them have difficulty reconciling with the personalities identified with former President Estrada. But between Villar and Arroyo, I think the former would have a lesser problem running with the Arap opposition as he's far more pragmatic.

Many pundits have expressed disgust at the emerging "family club" in the Senate, amid reports that siblings or children of senators are going to run this May for a seat in that body. I'm myself disgusted at the emerging spectacle of Alan Peter Cayetano joining sister Pia; JV Ejercito, his half-brother Jinggoy; and Aquilino Pimentel III, his father Aquilino Jr. Mercifully, it seems only one Aquino is running. It's easy to see why Koko Pimentel wants to run for the Senate. In Cagayan de Oro, he has lost twice in the mayoral race and for as long as Vicente Emano's around, he has little chance; whereas in a national race he'll have name recall. But can't Senator Pimentel ask his son to run instead in 2010, when his own term is over? This looming unprecedented insanity in the Senate should convince even half-hearted advocates of Cha-cha that abolishing the Senate is its best argument.

Earlier, I cited former President Ramos' quip at the Asean gala dinner. He said that as a member of the "Eminent Persons' Group," he should be addressed as "Your Eminent." But it was edited as "Your Eminence" by our publisher, Isagani Yambot, who understandably thought I had erred about this title normally reserved only for cardinals.

FILIPINOS WHO LOVE THEIR COUNTRY: READ this and weep.

The AFP reports that US military authorities in South Korea have apologized "over the alleged rape of a 67-year-old local woman by a US soldier, saying the case was 'an affront' to all servicemen." The apology was issued by Maj. Gen. John Morgan, the acting US 8th Army commander. Hours after South Korean police arrested a 23-year-old American soldier for allegedly raping and beating the woman in an alley in Seoul.

Morgan, in a statement posted on the US military website, said the case "tainted the reputation of US soldiers," with the general adding that he "deeply regrets and personally apologizes for the 'terrible incident that has resulted in grave injury to a Korean civilian.'"

Not only that, the soldier, who has yet to stand trial, has been transferred from police custody to prison, with a South Korean judge approving Tuesday a police request for his transfer to South Korean prison facilities. The news report said "no formal charges have been laid yet."

I hate to stress the obvious, but it seems Filipino officials need to have their faces rubbed in to the obvious. Contrast the quick apology on the part of the Americans, and the decisiveness of South Korean authorities in taking custody of a serviceman who remains at this time a "suspect," with the silence and even support of the US Embassy officials in Manila for convicted rapist Daniel Smith, as well as the abject surrender of sovereignty by Filipino officials in the case.

It gets worse. American military authorities have not only not apologized for the rape of Nicole, even after Smith's conviction by a local court, they even flexed their superior military muscles and threatened to cancel joint military exercises with Philippine troops if Smith was not turned over to the US Embassy.

And the Philippine government? It not only sided with the US Embassy in its interpretation of the VFA, it even sought to bamboozle Judge Benjamin Pozon into releasing Smith and, failing that, thumbed its nose at the judiciary by sneaking out Smith in the dead of night in defiance of

The autumn of the Comandante

THE DEATH WATCH OVER FIDEL CASTRO IS something that only Gabriel Garcia Marquez could get right. His novel "Autumn of the Patriarch" captures perfectly the moral squalor, political paralysis and savage ennui that enshroud a society awaiting the death of a long-term dictator.

Comandante Fidel's departure from power, of course, will be solely a matter of biology, and the few pictures of him that have emerged since he took ill last year clearly show biology at work. When the end comes, change in Cuba could be as vast as any that greeted the end of the last century's great dictators.

Stalin, Franco, Tito, Mao: all were mostly alike in their means and methods. How they passed from the scene, however, was often very different—and the differences can shape societies for years and decades to come.

Consider the Soviet Union. On March 9, 1953, from the Gulf of Finland to the Bering Sea, everything stood still; likewise in Warsaw, Budapest, Prague and East Berlin. In Beijing, Mao Zedong himself bowed low before an immense effigy of Joseph Stalin. Huge mourning crowds, crying, nearly hysterical, could be seen all over the vast empire Stalin had ruled.

Yet, within days, the word Stalinism was being expunged from a new Soviet dictionary, and three years later my grandfather, Nikita Khrushchev, denounced Stalin's "cult of personality" in his famous "Secret Speech" to the Communist Party's XXth Congress. The Khrushchev thaw that followed may have been short-lived, but for the first time in Soviet history, the possibility of change was opened—a possibility that Mikhail Gorbachev seized upon in 1985.

The death of Marshal Josip Broz Tito brought forth an outpouring of another sort. For decades, his personal rule imposed a false unity on Yugoslavia. Following his death in 1980, that artificial state began to unravel, culminating in the genocidal wars of the 1990s in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo.

Not all long-term dictatorships, however, end in disintegration and mayhem. Mao's death al-

WORLD VIEW

Nina Khrushcheva



lowed for Deng Xiaoping's return from disgrace and internal exile. Deng quickly routed Mao's "Gang of Four" heirs, and in only a few years opened China's economy, fueling a capitalist revolution that has transformed China far more completely—and successfully—than Mao's socialist revolution ever did. The Communist Party, of course, remains in power, and Mao's portrait still looms over Tiananmen Square. But both are mere relics of ideas and ideals that in reality have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

Spain, too, escaped violent dissolution when Generalissimo Francisco Franco's fascist dictatorship collapsed at his death. Here the old dictator can take some credit, for by re-establishing the monarchy under King Juan Carlos just before he died, Franco provided Spain with a foundation on which to build anew. Little did Franco realize that what Juan Carlos would build, with the help of a clever young Franco-era bureaucrat named Adolfo Suarez, would be the modern, democratic Spain of today.

It was no accident that communist countries were (and are) usually run by geriatric leaders, and democracies by younger men and women. That difference matters. Old leaders can preside successfully over smoothly running countries that need no radical re-examination of their policies and purposes. There are exceptions to this rule, of course—Churchill, Adenauer, Deng, Reagan—but states cannot count on fortune bringing an exceptional ruler their way. Younger leaders are more likely to be able to cope with the chop and change of difficult times.

Political competition makes it necessary for all

VFA shows why JPEPA should be rejected by the Filipinos

THE VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT and the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), which is still awaiting Senate approval, have one thing in common. Both contain vague provisions that favor our treaty "partners."

When the VFA was submitted to the Senate for ratification, there was a strong clamor for its rejection due to, among others, the ambiguous provisions regarding the custody of "visiting" US servicemen accused before Philippine courts of crimes they have allegedly committed while in the Philippines.

As everyone knows, the Senate ratified the VFA while turning a blind eye to its one-sidedness. No thanks to administration officials who eagerly yielded to our partner's interpretation of the ambiguous provisions. The VFA and the despicable manner the administration handled the "Smith cus-

tody" issue pursuant to the US government's interpretation of the VFA's ambiguous provisions have demoralized our people and made us the laughingstock in the international community. These also solidified our reputation as a pushover in bilateral relations.

Now we have the JPEPA which allows duty-free importation of toxic wastes from Japan. This agreement is being pushed by the same set of officials who are notorious for their lack of nationalistic and moral sense of duty to uphold our national interests above all else.

In pushing for the JPEPA ratification, these officials mouth the same line of argument they used in pushing for the ratification of the VFA—the prospective benefits we will derive from the agreement; benefits that are not commensurate to the price we pay as a people. We are not against treaties per se. But such agreements should pass the basic tenets of

fairness, equality, mutuality and, above all, should uphold and promote our national interests. Sadly, the VFA and JPEPA are sorely wanting in these standards.

We thus call on the honorable members of the Senate to exercise their constitutional and moral obligation to protect the Filipino people from onerous, dubious and ambiguous treaties, agreements or accords. The non-ratification of the JPEPA will keep administration officials from dancing to the tune of their foreign masters like what they are doing now in the "Smith fiasco." Moreover, rejection of the JPEPA will, at least, help the Senate cleanse itself of the ignominy of ratifying the VFA.

—EDGARDO B. LIGON,
executive director,
Initiatives for Dialogue and
Empowerment Through
Alternative Legal Services Inc.
(IDEALS Inc.), 4/F MB Building,
6 Kalayaan, Quezon City

School bullies now a problem in the Philippines?

THERE IS A PROBLEM WHICH, I believe, is serious and which people must be made aware of. I am now based in Australia but I grew up in the Philippines, and I am very proud of my Filipino upbringing. I also studied at the oldest Catholic university in Manila.

I was recently told that my 7-year-old niece who is studying at a Catholic school in Quezon City has become a victim of bullying. Here in Australia, bullying is a problem

that has gone out of hand. Programs have been launched in every school to stop bullying. These programs have the strong support of the government and community. It's simply heartbreaking to hear that the same problem now exists in the Philippines.

I never heard of bullying in schools when I was growing up—not until I got to college where it was usually done by fraternities. But I never heard of a case of bul-

lying involving 7-year-old kids.

What is happening to our children? What is causing this? Who/What is to blame?

I am writing about this because I believe something has to be done—fast. Before the problem gets any worse or out of hand and we end up with children without values and respect for others.

—MARIA CHRISTINA
MEDINA-MACKAY, 21 Plucks Road,
Arana Hills, QLD Australia 4054



Awesome vs awful

INDEED, ONE'S RESPONSE TO the same stimulus may either be awesome or awful.

I cannot agree more with VFA Commission Executive Director Zosimo Paredes' statement that the Arroyo administration "took the law into its own hands"—practically by coercion and bullying—when it effected the controversial Dec. 29 transfer of convicted American rapist, Daniel Smith, from the Makati City Jail to the US Embassy without a court order. (PDI, 01/05/07) In these days of moribund nationalism in this part of the world, it was reassuring to know that at least one government official had not joined the club of "lickers of the American a—."

On the other hand, I nearly puked upon reading Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ruben Reyes' assertion that the executive department's act did not constitute an affront to the court. (PDI, 01/02/07) Of course, I did not know then that Reyes was one of the 11 candidates being considered for the still vacant position of associate justice of the Supreme Court, a vacancy which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—on whose behest the "Smith escape" was carried out—will soon fill up.

In a situation where one government official felt a moral obligation to stick his neck out, another found the opportunity to ingratiate himself to the administration.

—RUDY L. CORONEL,
10 Venus St.,
Golden Country Homes,
Alangilan, Batangas City

Citation wrong, quote not baseless

I WRITE IN REACTION TO THE INQUIRER commentary on a misquote allegedly spun off from the decision in the case Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad Co. vs May (194 US 267, 270) that was used by Court of Appeals Justice Apolinario Bruselas Jr. in his ponencia on the Smith custody case. (PDI, 1/10/07)

Even without US Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' statement, it is well settled that the two other branches of government—executive and Congress—are the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people. They are not called political departments for nothing. While the power to declare what the law is or how the same is to be applied belongs to the judiciary, to the other two branches belong the powers of policy-making.

While in a strict sense, it is the legislature which possesses the lawmaking powers, the administrative agencies have also the delegated authority to make laws, rules and regulations that are needed to fill in gaps in the legislative enactments. It is the President, as head of state, who enters into treaties and international agreements, subject to the concur-

rence of the Senate.

On the other hand, the footnote/citation in Brusela's ponencia may have been inaccurate, but it is not entirely without basis in the sense that US Justice J. Harlan in his dissenting opinion in the case of *Plast et al. vs Cohen*, secretary of health, education and welfare, et al. (392 US 83) stated as follows: "We must as judges recall that, as Mr. Justice Holmes wisely observed, the other branches of the Government are ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people in quite as great a degree as the courts." (Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad Co. vs May, 194 US 267, 270)

The mix-up between the Holmes and the Harlan theses may probably be due to the fact that Holmes, not Harlan, is the foremost authority on judicial restraint. To attribute bad faith on the part of the esteemed Justice Brusela—nay, the entire ponencia and *ratio decidendi* of Smith vs Pozon—because of a wrong citation, without considering the substance of his statement, would simply be hairsplitting and making a mountain out of a molehill.

—CARLO ALCALA,
martin_to@yahoo.com

Candidates must be at least college grads

THERE ARE SO MANY LOOPHOLES in our Constitution, among them, the "qualifications of candidates for elective government offices."

Since they'll be running for public office, they should be better equipped to meet the demands of the positions they're running for. They should not be just natural-born Filipinos, which presupposes that they have a deep sense of nationalism. They should be, at least, college graduates or professionals.

It is most unfortunate that a lot

of Filipino voters settle for popular candidates, never mind that they are illiterate. So we end up with politicians who have voracious appetites for huge pork barrel and high salaries but are ignorant of the laws of the land. We get the candidates we deserve.

I hope that our legislature will address this problem by coming up with better qualification standards relevant and responsive to our present and ever-changing needs.

—WC ALTAREJOS,
Quezon City

Competing with IT gadgets for students' attention

I HAVE BEEN A TEACHER FOR ONLY TWO years, but already I find myself alarmed at the values, attitudes, behavior and outlook of our students today, compared to those of my so-called Generation X. Students nowadays lack the drive and love for learning. Though this may sound like a sweeping statement, I can't help but get this impression that it's not knowledge that today's students are after when they go to school.

I was a "Batibot" and "Sesame Street" baby. Growing up with Pong Pagong, Kiko Matsing, Kuya Boji, Big Bird, Elmo and Grover proved to be instrumental in shaping my world view and in my preparation for everyday life. Every day after school, TV networks would air educational shows such as these on time slots when students were home from school. The shows had segments on how to cut and shape a pastillas wrapper, mold and fire porcelain, fold a paper boat for rainy days, prepare (on the night before) clothes to wear the next day, prevent acid rain, or share food with those who have none. The shows were educational, values-oriented, very wholesome and entertaining.

It also wasn't long ago when children played in the streets and not in front of computers. Back when I was a child, there was always something to do because the shows allowed us to explore what could be done. Even though I lived in a suburban village, my neighbors and I would go around town in quest for adventure: checking out abandoned houses, playing in the rain, clearing up the streets after a storm, going up water tanks, hanging out on rooftops

and taking up "missions" to clean up our streets for the environment. Nowadays, children have this misconception that there is nothing left to explore, and if there is, it comes in a format known as .COM, MP3, MPEG4, JPEG and so on.

With IT now readily accessible, entertainment choices may have become so varied. But this has ruined the young's spirit for adventure. Children are getting fatter in front of television sets and are having sleepless nights in front of computers.

We must develop children in their totality—mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually; but they are spending more time for leisure than for their development. I go to school with children who have slept for only three hours, who value iPods more than books, who prefer holidays to opportunities for learning.

It is a challenge to manage a class with uninterested students. It is harder to keep them involved in and focused on what they are supposed to learn. Entertainment, technology and their whims have become our nemeses. Sometimes I find reason to work with these things they find interesting, but it's altogether tiring just trying to incorporate everything to keep them interested in their lessons. Some teachers make an effort to compete with IT gadgets, others dare not. There is hope though. The media can play a more active role in this regard.

—CRISSIE D. MALAY,
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INQUIRER *Visayas*

The 'Thousand Lakes' of Eastern Samar

By Cyraín G. Cabueñas
Borongan, Eastern Samar

IF PANGASINAN HAS ITS HUNDRED Islands, Eastern Samar has its Thousand Lakes." This has been the joke circulating among texters in Eastern Samar after the holidays, referring to its bad roads.

But priests at the Diocese of Borongan are not laughing. After an urgent meeting last week, the priests and deacons drafted a statement to be distributed to government officials and read from the pulpits. They were led by Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) spokesperson Msgr. Pedro Qutorio III and Diocesan Administrator Msgr. Lope Robredillo.

"We, the clergy of the Diocese of Borongan, join the voices of our fellow Eastern Samaritans who, already groaning under the yoke of abject poverty, cry further over the terrible road conditions in many parts of the province," they said.

Titled "Cry of the Poor," the statement cited the monster craters halting traffic to an agonizing crawl in the roads of the northern areas between Taft and Borongan and between Borongan and Buenavista in the southern part.

It deplored the long and unjust delay of appropriate action by concerned government agencies and the record of leaders long on promises but short on accomplishments.

"We especially note how this particular Eastern Samar woe showcases the fact that governance in this part has priorities other than the people's true needs," it said.

"We therefore urge the Department of Public Works and Highways and other concerned government agencies, our leaders, both local and national, to take immediate action and put a stop to the sufferings inflicted on their brothers and sisters in Eastern Samar," it added.

Doing his best

Gov. Ben Evardone said he was deeply affected by the road problems and that he was doing his best to find solutions.

"I have allocated funds for the provincial maintenance crew and tapped the different barangay chairs to mobilize their people, even if technically and legally this is a primary responsibility of the DPWH, which I have no control of," Evardone said.

He said he would be meeting his legal consultants soon on whether the provincial government could disburse funds for national road projects.

It's about time the people of Eastern Samar raised their collective cry, Qutorio said.

He said some politicians never care because they just ride comfortably in their expensive cars.

"My father, who passed away last week, simply complained about stomach pains but never made it to the hospital in Tacloban for he died along the way. The bad roads might have aggravated his condition and travel time was almost double," Qutorio said.

District engineer Pacita Gavan said she understood the sentiments of the people. "There have been road problems before but not like these," she said.



CRATER-LIKE holes like the ones in this road are found in practically all sections of the 45-km road between the capital town of Borongan and the northern town of Taft in Eastern Samar.

PHOTOS BY CYRAIN CABUEÑAS

Four years ago, Gavan said, travel time from Borongan to Taft (a 48-km distance) was only 45 minutes but now it is more than two hours. From Borongan to Guiuan (110 km), it was less than two hours then, but now it's more than three hours.

From Borongan to Tacloban (200 km), via the North road, travel used to be three-and-a-half hours only. Now, it takes six hours even if the distance is supposed to be shorter by 9 km than the south coastal road, she said.

Funding problem

Gavan, who became the acting district engineer in October last year, said she was saddened by the negative perception of people about the DPWH.

"Inevitably, the blame falls on us always and that corruption and dishonesty are rife. But as far as I am concerned, I can face God and anybody face to face. Give us the money and we will do our best to deliver what is due the people," she said.

Gavan cited the lack of budget allotted for highway repair. In 2006, only P60 million was appropriated, of which P25 million still needed a Special Allotment Release Order from the Department of Budget and Management.

"We only get this much from the national

budget and the CDF (Countrywide Development Fund) of (Eastern Samar) Rep. Marcelino Libanan. What can you do with P60 million except temporary patching?" she added.

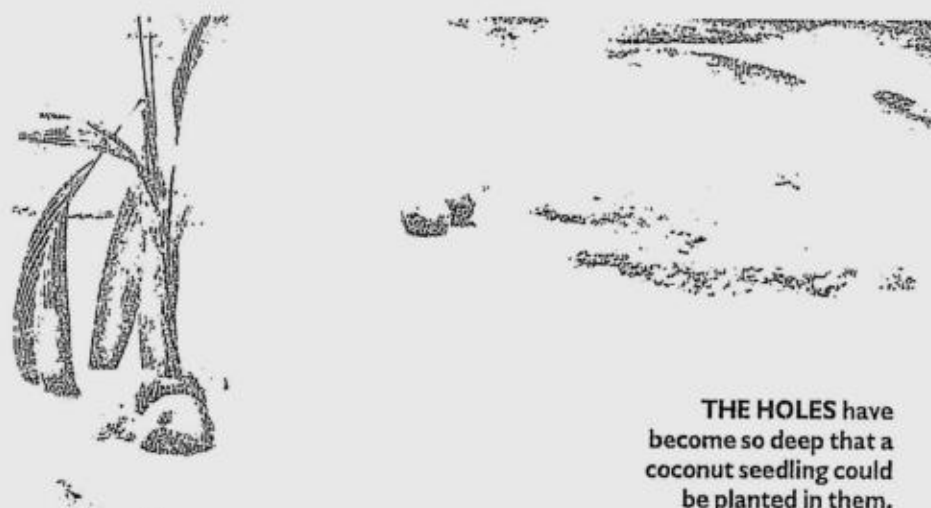
At 10 million per kilometer, repair of the Taft-Guiuan highway alone, which covers 158 km, will need P1.1 billion, Gavan said.

Evardone said the provincial government could shoulder a fraction of the estimated per-kilometer

cost if Capitol would be legally allowed to do so.

He said the province will acquire the equipment soon and his engineers could do the job at a lower cost.

If the DPWH and some contractors' estimate is P10 million per kilometer of asphalted road, the province will only need a minimum of P1.5 million since it will no longer rent the equipment, Evardone said.



THE HOLES have become so deep that a coconut seedling could be planted in them.

Rains destroy P208M crops, roads in Northern Samar

By Joey A. Gabieta
Tacloban City

THE DESTRUCTION BROUGHT by continuous rains to agriculture and infrastructure in Northern Samar, estimated to reach over P200 million, would have adverse impact on the province's economic development, according to Gov. Raul Daza.

"It is really a big setback to our economic development. The destruction to our various roads and bridges and in our agriculture was too high for us to afford to rehabilitate," Daza said in an interview through his mobile phone.

State of calamity

The Northern Samar provincial disaster management office had estimated that total damages to the province's infrastructure and agriculture sector would reach P208 million. The provincial government had placed six towns under a state of calamity due to the extensive damages they suffered.

These include the towns of Silvino Lobos, Pambujan, Catubig, San Roque, Mondragon and Catarman, the provincial capital.

He also expressed sympathy for the rice farmers, who lost their crops when their rice fields were flooded. Some rice fields were ready for harvest when the flooding occurred, Daza added.

He also cited the lack of financial support from the national government.

"What we have received from the national government,

through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, was 1,000 sacks of rice. [There was] no financial assistance," he said.

Northern Samar, composed of 24 towns, has a poverty incidence of 40.7 percent, based on the records of the regional National Statistical Coordinating Board.

The regional Office of Civil Defense said the flooding displaced more than 25,000 families (about 103,854 persons) in Northern Samar. It also resulted in the deaths of 15 people and injury to 29 others.

The heavy rains also destroyed more than 4,600 houses in the province.

The OCD report said several portions of Mondragon and Pambujan towns remained flooded.

Some of the evacuees have returned to their homes while others were still staying with their relatives, OCD regional director Salvador Estudillo said.

Damaged roads

Several roads and bridges in Leyte and Southern Leyte were also damaged.

In Leyte, the damaged road sections were along the Calubian-San Isidro-Tabango-Villaba-Palompon Road; the Tabango-Catmon-Manlawaan-Gimarco Road and the Cabunga-an-Tabunok-Consuegra Road in Leyte town.

The damaged roads in Southern Leyte were located along the boundary of Mahaplag-Sogod-Libangan Road and the Himayangan-St. Bernard Road and the San Ricardo-Bilt-atan Road.

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WHAT WENT BEFORE

CASES of Chinese fishermen being freed after intruding into Philippine waters are not new. Here are some from INQUIRER archives.

March 25, 1995—Sixty-two fishermen are arrested near Alicia Anile Reef on board four fishing boats. Seized were 100 sticks of dynamite, cyanide powder and blasting caps. Seized, too, were red corals, shark's fins and turtles. They were charged with illegal fishing and illegal entry and convicted of malicious mischief but then President Fidel Ramos grants all of them conditional pardon.

July 31, 1997—In Hasa-Has Shoal, the Philippine Navy apprehends a Chinese vessel with 23 crew members. Found were live and frozen fish, 17 pieces of blasting caps and powdered solutions. But the Philippine Committee on Illegal Entrants recommends the dismissal of illegal fishing cases against them, saying the boat was forced into the Philippine waters due to a typhoon, although a Navy officer said the weather was fine that day.

Sept. 23, 1998—After 20 minutes of pursuit, a foreign vessel manned by 26 Chinese nationals is stopped by the Philippine Navy in the waters of Balabac, Southern Palawan. The boat had 2,000 kg of *lapu-lapu* (groupers), fishing gears, 24 small boats and four compressors. Two samples of *lapu-lapu* later tested positive for sodium cyanide. They are charged with illegal fishing but not detained, staying instead in their boats with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Palawan supplying their food. Authorities later ruled there was no violation since the Chinese were not caught in the act of fishing. Neither was the presence of cyanide given weight.

Chinese gov't letter pressed RP to free Tubbataha poachers

THIRTY CHINESE poachers who were caught in the Tubbataha Reef had been released following a demand from the Chinese Embassy made through a letter to Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

The poachers were freed shortly after spending a few hours in jail for intruding into the protected waters of the Tubbataha Reef on Dec. 21.

The leftist fisherman's group Pambansang Kilusang Mamatlakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) furnished the INQUIRER the Dec. 28 letter of Chinese Ambassador Li Jinjun to Romulo and Yap.

The group said the office of Sen. Jambay Madrigal gave them the copy. "It is our sincere wish that prompt measures will be taken to ensure the vessel and crewmembers (sic) are released as soon as possible..." said the letter, signed by Chinese Ambassador Li Jinjun.

The arrest of the Chinese poachers came prior to the visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Jinjun's letter said their, and their boat's, release would "create a favorable atmosphere" for the Chinese leader's visit and "lay solid foundation for the fishery coopera-



THE CHINESE fishing boat FV King King Hai, held in Palawan before its release, carried with it stuffed turtles caught in Philippine waters.

tion between the two countries."

Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chair, said the letter was the piece of evidence that shows Romulo and Yap intervened for the release of the Chinese poachers.

Pamalakaya is helping prose-

cute the poachers with other non-government groups.

"Ambassador Li Jinjun's letter... would logically lead us to a conclusion that the two high officials of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration interceded (for the release

of the poachers)," Hicap said.

Hicap accused Romulo and Yap of conspiring with Malacañang "in selling the country's national sovereignty and patrimony to Chinese invaders."

Li, in his letter, said the capture of the poachers and their vessels

was a "very urgent and sensitive issue which may exert serious impact on our relationship."

Li told Romulo that "both the Chinese government and the HK-SAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) attached great importance to the incident."

"We would like to express our regret over the incident which happened right before the official visit of Premier Wen Jiabao to the Philippines when the agriculture ties, fishery cooperation between our two countries enjoy sound momentum," Li said in the letter.

The Chinese Premier arrived in the country last week and had conferred with President Macapagal-Arroyo on varied issues during the two-day state visit.

On top of the request to the Philippine government to release the Chinese fishing vessel and its 30 crew members, Li said the Chinese government will release an additional six million Yuan, or roughly \$800,000, in aid for victims of Super typhoon Reming.

Shortly after the letter was sent, Judge Torribio Ilao, of Branch 52 of the Puerto Princesa Regional Trial Court, on Jan. 8 ordered the release of 24 Chinese poachers who were in jail.

They were caught in possession of endangered fish species, including the Napoleon wrasse or *mameng*.

Six of the poachers had been released earlier by the same judge.

Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Cops nab 2 Chinese in Batangas drug raids

STO. TOMAS, BATANGAS—ANTI-narcotics agents and the local police here arrested two Chinese nationals and their Filipino associate in a raid on two houses in Sto. Tomas, Batangas and in nearby Tanauan City, which are being used by a big-time drug syndicate as shabu laboratories in separate operations in the last three days, police said Friday.

Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan, Calabarzon police director, identified the arrested suspects as Hui Ching Chi Ngo, 58, and Allan

Ngo, 52, both Chinese nationals and residing in Cubao, Quezon City; and their Filipino cohort as Joebert Vasquez.

Elements of the Sto. Tomas police first swooped down on a rented bungalow along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay San Rafael at around 2 p.m. on Wednesday.

Supt. Raul Tacaca, town police chief, said the discovery of the clandestine shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) manufacturing unit was just accidental.

Tacaca said the owner of the

house, whom he did not identify for security reasons, went to the local police station at around 11 a.m. on Tuesday and complained that its occupants refused to let him in.

"The owner said he wanted to check on the house because he was told that it was being used for illegal activities," Tacaca told the INQUIRER.

He said the owner told him that Chinese-looking men were seen frequenting the area.

Tacaca said police went to the area to explain to the occupants that the owner has the right to enter the residence as stipulated in the lease contract.

"When we entered the house, we smelled something different. It was really obnoxious. That was when we suspected that the house could be a shabu lab," he said.

Police found the illegal drugs in plastic containers and casseroles inside one of the three bedrooms of the house.

"We were really surprised by what we discovered. *Natisod lang talaga namin*. (We just stumbled on it)," he said.

Tacaca said they recovered at least 16 kg of shabu.

Tacaca said police found that a certain Arlene Villena, 28, a resident of Barangay Trapiche, Tanauan City, paid P26,000 as deposit and advance payment for the rent of the house in October last year. She is now being hunted.

During interrogation, Tacaca said Vasquez admitted that they also maintain another house in Barangay Balele, Tanauan City that the syndicate bought for P5.6 million. **Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

German facing sex cases kills himself in NBI jail

DAGUPAN CITY—A GERMAN, who was arrested by National Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Immigration agents in Alaminos City on Wednesday on charges of acts of lasciviousness, was found dead early Thursday at the NBI detention cell here.

Uwe Krause, 54, committed suicide by hanging himself using nylon bag straps tied to the iron ceiling grill of his cell, lawyer Jose Doloiras, NBI agent-in-charge here, said.

Doloiras said that Krause's death was discovered at about 4 a.m. when his girlfriend, Jeannie Eustaquio, 25, noticed that the German was not in his bed.

Thinking that he went out, Eustaquio called for the guard on duty, who discovered that Krause had hung himself, Doloiras said.

"He could have lived if he had wanted to," the official said. "He just slid his feet from the top of the toilet bowl and he could have easily stepped back on it to save himself if he wanted."

Doloiras said that he had asked Eustaquio to stay right outside Krause's cell to keep him company. "He's a foreigner, you know, and he preferred people he knew to watch him," Doloiras said.

Krause was scheduled to be arraigned on Thursday at a regional trial court in Alaminos City.



MUG SHOT of the suicide. RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

where two counts of statutory rape were also scheduled to be filed against him.

Doloiras said Krause was accused of molesting in August and November last year a nine-year-old niece of his late common-law wife.

Krause was also facing charges of acts of lasciviousness filed by the mother of three children aged seven, nine and 12.

Based on information from the German Embassy, Krause had been convicted of child abuse in Germany, Doloiras said but for unexplained reasons, was allowed entry into the Philippines.

Gabriel Cardinosa, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ROUNDUP

3 dead in gunfight

COTABATO CITY—The chief security officer of a banana export company in Maguindanao and two other persons were killed in a gunfight in Buluan town on Thursday. Maguindanao police chief Supt. Binudini Ali said the gunfight was apparently triggered by a feud between Datuwa Sankiga, chief security officer of La Frutera Inc., and his cousin Nelson Sankiga. Ali said the Sankigas, who led two armed groups, had an altercation that resulted in the gunfight around 8:45 a.m. Datuwa, Sanib Kondila and a still unidentified man, were killed in the clash. Nelson, who was critically injured, claimed self-defense when his group opened fire on Datuwa's group. Feuds, which are pride-related, are often the cause of violence in Maguindanao.

Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

Davao billboards to fall

DAVAO CITY—Only seven of the 147 advertising billboards here will be torn down because of glaring violations of the National Building Code, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Southern Mindanao said. Rowena Jamito, DPWH maintenance engineer, said notices have already been issued to the owners of the billboards. The government has embarked on a nationwide campaign against advertising billboards that are deemed hazards. Super typhoon Milenyo toppled several billboards in Metro Manila, killing several people. Jamito said the DPWH has also asked other companies to reinforce the structure of their billboards to make these sturdier.

Rizalene Acac, Inquirer Mindanao

Mangyan graduation

CITY OF CALAPAN—The first batch of Hanunuo youths graduated on Jan. 15 from the Hanunuo Mangyan School for Living Traditions in Bulalacao, the southernmost town in Oriental Mindoro. Artist Dita Sandico-Ong, of the Earthlite Foundation that handled the project, the group wanted to serve as a conduit to the outside world to help market and disseminate information to promote traditional forms of weaving and environmental awareness. The National Commission on Culture and the Arts and the local government unit of Bulalacao hosted the event.

Madonna Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Rob gang member arrested

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A member of a robbery syndicate preying on Indian nationals was arrested in a police operation in a slum area in Biñan, Laguna on Thursday, police said. Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, chief of the Criminal and Detection Group (CIDG) in Calabarzon, identified the suspect as Markjim Gonzales, alias Abu, 21, native of Siniloan, Laguna. The arrest was made through a warrant issued by Judge Francisco Pano of the San Pedro Regional Trial Court, Belarma said. He said Gonzales was a member of the Dimaranan Group, notorious for robberies in the first district of Laguna. The arrest warrant was based on a criminal complaint filed by Indian businessman Rajiv Sadhra Kumar who accused the suspect of robbing him at gunpoint last Jan. 9 and took away P4,000 in collection from his lending business. Police raided the suspect's lair in Barangay Sto. Tomas. The suspect did not resist arrest. Found in his possession was a hand grenade.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 kids killed in knife attacks

DAGUPAN CITY—A year-old boy and his 14-year-old brother were stabbed and wounded by a group of men in their hut in Urdaneta City on Monday. Police said Christopher Fonacier, 1, was stabbed 18 times and was in critical condition at the Region 1 Medical Center here. His older brother, Rogelio, was stabbed seven times. The boys' father, Ronnie Fonacier, 47, a farmer, said his children were left alone in their hut in Barangay Consolacion as he was working in a rice field in another village. Their mother and a six-year-old sister were in the market to buy vegetables at the time of the knife attacks. Supt. Paquito Navarrete, Urdaneta police chief, said police arrested a suspect but they were waiting for Rogelio to recover so he could identify him.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuentes, Inquirer Northern Luzon

5 gang members nabbed

CALAMBA CITY—Police arrested five suspected members of the Hagibis Group, a criminal syndicate preying on motorcycle owners in an entrapment operation inside a subdivision in Barangay Banlic here on Wednesday. Regional Special Operations Group chief Supt. James Brillantes identified those arrested as Alfred Alinsunurin, 31; Ferdinand Flaviano, 32; Rey Angelo Ignacio, 51; Noel Hapa, 25; and Rolly Andaluz, 28, all residents of Calamba City. He said policemen went to the group's hideout in Villa Palao, Barangay Banlic and pretended to buy stolen motorcycles. Brillantes said they recovered two stolen motorcycles from the group.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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SPORTS

RP lady golfers get P13.7-M training

WITH AN EYE ON MEDAL FINISHES IN THE Asian Games, Southeast Asian Games and the world team championships, the country's golf "godfather" will be sending all four members of the prodigious ladies golf squad to a top-notch, two-year training in the United States in March.

Two-time world junior champion Dottie Ardina, former RP Ladies winner Debbie de Villa, 16, reigning world junior champ Cyna Rodriguez, 15, and Mia Piccio, 15, will attend the David Leadbetter Golf Academy in Florida. The four, together with a parent-chaperone, will fly to the southern US state on March 18.

There the Filipino teenagers will be enrolled in the prestigious golf academy while attending classes at Brighton University—courtesy of golf patron Ricky Razon of the International Container Terminals and Services, Inc.

"I am looking forward to it," said Ardina, the 13-year-old champion of last year's Indonesian and Hong Kong ladies Opens. "I hope to further improve my game there."

Razon has already approved a \$280,000 (P13.675,200) budget for the training stint of the teenagers, who will also see action in major Stateside events, including the qualifying tournament for the US women's amateur.

The support of the man at the helm of the port services giant ICTSI was instrumental in the victories of the RP team in the men's competition and of Juvic Pagunsan in individual play at the SEA Games in 2005.

He also funded the training of the RP teams that competed in the 15th Doha Asian Games, where Michael Bibat nailed the men's individual bronze.

Ted Melendres



ARDINA

Red Bull gores Sta. Lucia

Ritualo sparkles as Phone Pals cut Giants to size

GAMES TOMORROW (Cuneta Astrodome)
4:05 p.m.—Purefoods vs Talk 'N Text
6:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia

By Musong R. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—JUST A GAME after Yeng Guiao said that he was preparing his team for the long haul came a Red Bull performance that looks capable of ending this quarterfinal series early.

The Barako started out hot for the first time in their Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup series with Sta. Lucia, going on to post a runaway 114-96 victory at the Ynares Center here for a 2-1 series lead.

"The situation (in the series) is turning for the better for the team," Guiao said. "We played our best game in this series because we were able to speed up the pace and sustain it."

Enrico Villanueva finished with 20 points and nine rebounds and reserve guard Magnum Membrere came off the bench to spark the game's telling run in the third period as Red Bull won for the second straight night.

The game last night also marked the second time that Villanueva was a major factor.

After a forgettable first game, which the Barako lost in a horrid manner, Villanueva was scoreless in the first three periods of Game 2, before shooting six of his eight points in an overtime Game 2 victory which could prove to be the back-breaker of this series.

"Now that we have momentum, and a twice-to-beat advantage, *di na namin pakakawalan ito sa Sunday* (we will not let this slip away on Sunday)," Guiao said. "*Kakayurin na namin ito* (we will grind this out)."

In the second game, The Talk 'N Text Phone Pals rode on Renren Ritualo's 15-point fourth-quarter effort to also man-



THERE'S little leather to go around with, and so Red Bull's Celino Cruz (left) battles the Sta. Lucia duo of Dennis Espino and Nelbert Omolon fiercely for possession while teammate Enrico Villanueva looks on.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

handle the Purefoods Chunkee Giants, 102-78, and take a 2-1 lead in their series.

The Phone Pals, who trailed early in the match after failing to contain Kerby Rymundo in the opening quarter, were up by only six at the end of the third before Ritualo waxed hot and helped his team forget that it was playing minus suspended playmaker Jimmy Alapag.

Membrere hit two consecutive three-pointers that touched off a decisive Red Bull run, as the Barako broke away from a 57-48 game for 71-50 that all but took the

fight out of the fagged Realtors.

"I think it is only now that they (Realtors) are starting to feel the long season," Guiao explained.

Sta. Lucia, after playing four games in an eight-day stretch to survive the wild card phase, won the series opener after building a 28-point first half lead.

The Scores:

First Game
RED BULL 114—Villanueva 20, Valenzuela 16, Baguio 14, Fonacier 12, Membrere 11, Cruz 11, Sharma 9, Najorda 8, Alvarez 4, Robinson 4, Pennisi 3, Bu-

gla 2

STA. LUCIA 96—Omolon 21, Mendoza 19, Williams 14, Gonzales 14, Espino 11, Isip 9, Aquino 5, Cabagnoy 3, Bughao 0, Catli 0, Callmag 0

Quarters: 30-22, 53-45, 80-63, 114-96.

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 102—Cardona 24, Ritualo 23, Taulava 14, Washington 12, De Ocampo 10, Belano 8, Carey 5, Noble 4, Fran 2, Pablo 0.

PUREFOODS 78—Rymundo 19, Yap J. 16, Yap R. 10, Yee 8, Simon 7, Evangelista 5, Castillo 5, Limpot 4, Salvador 2, Artadi 2, Pingris 0, Camaso 0

Quarters: 20-26, 46-45, 65-59, 102-78

Barbosa, Hamed give RP squad reason to smile

Final Standings:

7.5 pts—GM Le Quang Liem (VIE); 6.0—GM Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son (VIE), GM Dao Thien Hai (VIE), GM Nelson Mariano II (RP), GM Nguyen Anh Dung (VIE); 5.5—IM Wesley So (RP), NM Nouri Hamed (RP), GM Tu Hoang Thong (VIE), IM Bui Vinh (VIE), Hoang Canh Huan (VIE), FM Batchuluun Cegmed (Myanmar), GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. (RP); 5.0—IM Oliver Dimakiling (RP), NM Oliver Barbosa (RP), IM Darwin Laylo (RP), IM Ronald Dableo (RP), FM Pham Chuong (VIE), FM Duong The Anh (VIE), FM Nguyen Huynh Minh Huy (VIE), GM Mark Paragua (RP), Nguyen Van Huy (VIE); 4.5—GM Eugene Torre (RP)

THE RP CHESS TEAM WON'T BE COMING home empty handed after all.

National Masters Oliver Barbosa and Nouri Hamed and Woman NM Catherine Pereña secured IM norms in the 2007 Asian Zonal 3.3 Chess Championship held recently in Phu Quoc, Kien Giang province in Vietnam.

International arbiter (IA) Willie Abalos, board of director and delegation head, said Hamed and Barbosa could have earned outright IM titles had they won their last round assignments.

Hamed settled for a truce with eventual winner 15-year-old GM Le Quang Liem of Vietnam in the ninth and final round of the regional tournament that also serves as a qualifier for the World Championships.

Barbosa yielded to Vietnamese GM Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, the 16-year-old who won five gold medals in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Son finished with 6.0 points to join GM Dao Thien Hai (Vietnam), GM Nelson Mariano II (Philippines) and GM Nguyen Anh Dung (Vietnam) in the single round robin tournament.

But Son topped the playoff matches to earn the last berth for the World Championships.

Son accumulated 2.5 points by beating Mariano and Anh Dung and scoring a draw with Dao.

In other matches, Dao outclassed IM Darwin Laylo, Anh Dung defeated IM Oliver Dimakiling, while Mariano halved the point with FM Batchuluun Cegmed of Myanmar.

The 33-year-old Mariano could have avoided the playoff had he won his last round assignment.

In the 2001 Manila edition, both Anh Dung and Dao claimed the two men's berths in the World Championships.

The Philippines bounced back in the 2003 Vietnam edition with IM Ronald Dableo and top-ranked GM Mark Paragua advancing in the 2004 Tripoli World Championships in Libya.

Indon GM Utut Adianto and Paragua won the 2005 Malaysia edition to earn slots in the 2005 Khanty Mansik World Championships in West Siberia.

According to National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. and secretary-general Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr., the Philippines can still vie for 10 slots in the World Championships.

The Filipino woodpushers, along with world chess power India and China, and former Soviet Union Republic, will compete in the Asian Continental Chess Championships in August in Manila.

In women's play, Vietnamese WFM Le Than Tu bagged the overall championship and secured a seat in the Women's World Championships.

Banal stakes unbeaten record

YOUTHFUL SENSATION AJ 'BAZOOKA' BANAL stakes his unblemished record against Thailand's Terdkiat Jandaeng in a Sinulog mardi gras card tonight at the Mandaue Sports Complex.

The 18-year-old Banal, who boasts of an immaculate 11-0 (8 KOs) record, has been tapped as one of the challengers for the vacant WBO Asia-Pacific Youth title.

Terdkiat, who flew in from Bangkok Thursday evening with trainer/manager Soontorn Moonkham, is the younger brother of WBO Asia-Pacific champion Terdsak Jandaeng.

If successful, Banal will see action on February 24 possibly against a Latino fighter for the WBO Asia Pacific Youth title before flying to the US to

train under Freddie Roach.

Banal came in at 116 lbs while Jandaeng tipped the scales at 117 lbs in yesterday's weigh-in at the ALA Gym.

The undercard will feature top-ranked flyweight Rocky Fuentes in a rematch Greg Mang after their previous fight ended in a draw.

Another explosive match-up features the unbeaten Milan Milendo (106 lbs) against veteran Fabio Marfa (107 lbs).

The rest of the card: Glen Masicampo (135.5 lbs) vs Anton Olarte (132.5 lbs), Joseph Omana (120 lbs) vs Carlo Magale (120 lbs), Ruben Santillana (122 lbs) vs Edward Apa-ap (122 lbs).

Salven Lagumbay, contributor

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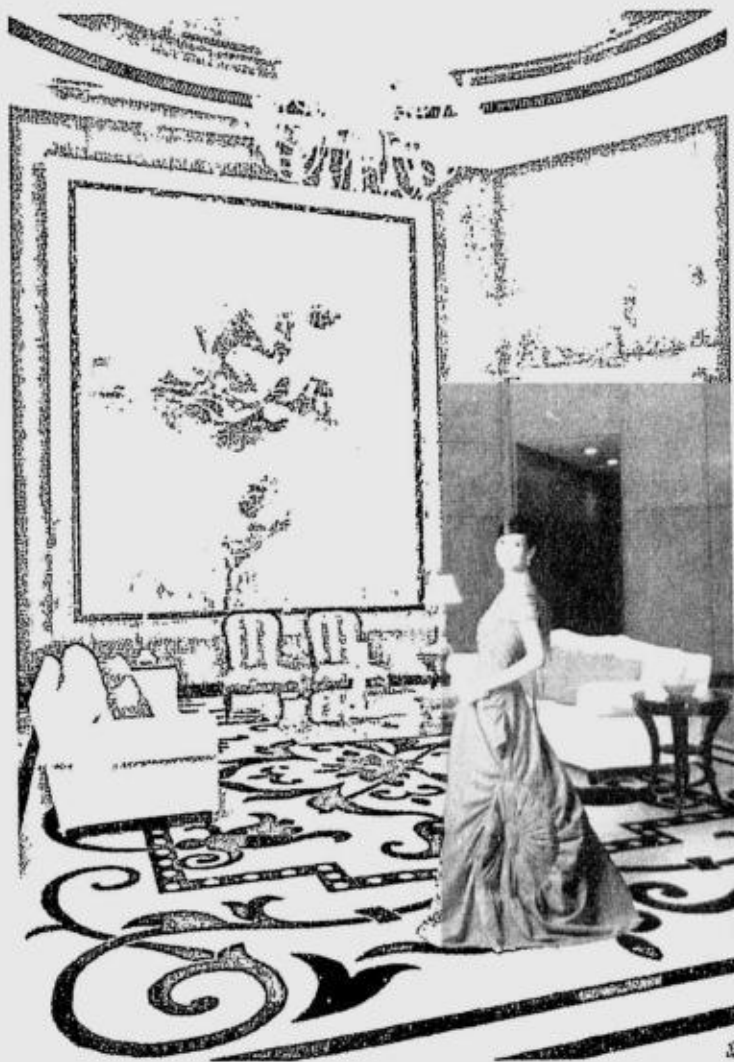
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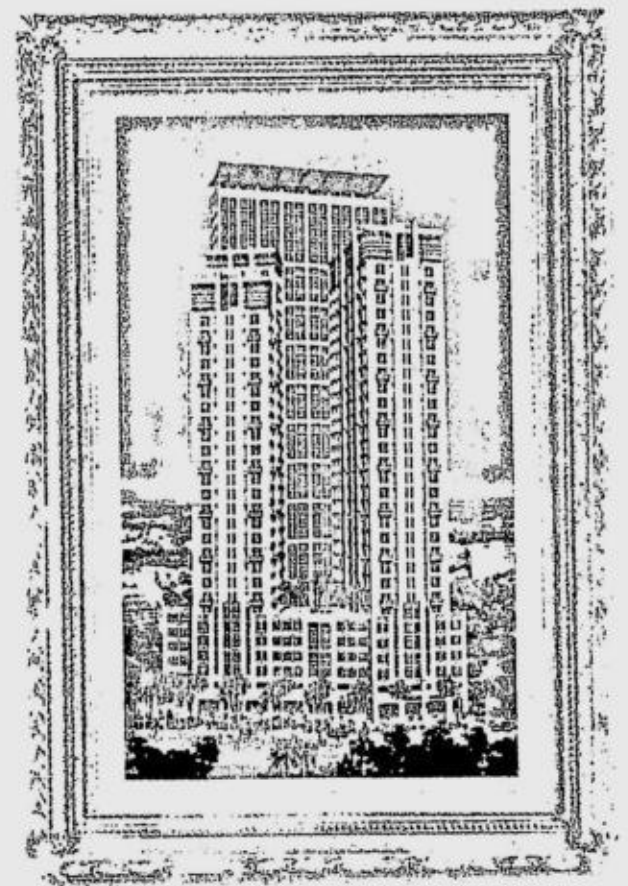


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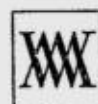


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Ballacillo slay suspect says he's innocent

Alleges cops offered him P.3M to admit to killing of OSG lawyer, son

By Jocelyn R. Uy

BENJAMIN PAREDES GARCIA, ALIAS Christopher Bermudez, who is being linked to the murder of Assistant Solicitor General Nestor Ballacillo and his son,

Benedict, claims the police offered him P300,000 to admit to the murders.

In a counter-affidavit filed in the Parañaque City Prosecutor's Office, Garcia claimed the offer was made on Dec. 20, 2006 in a Cavite hospital.

"I refused because I did not do what they said I did. But the next day, photographers came and the police said they had witnesses who had identified me as the killer of [Ballacillo]. This could not have happened because I don't know

him," Garcia said in his handwritten affidavit.

Father and son were on their way to the elder Ballacillo's office in Makati City on Dec. 6, 2006 when they were attacked by two suspects on Hernandez

Avenue, Valley 1 in Barangay San Antonio.

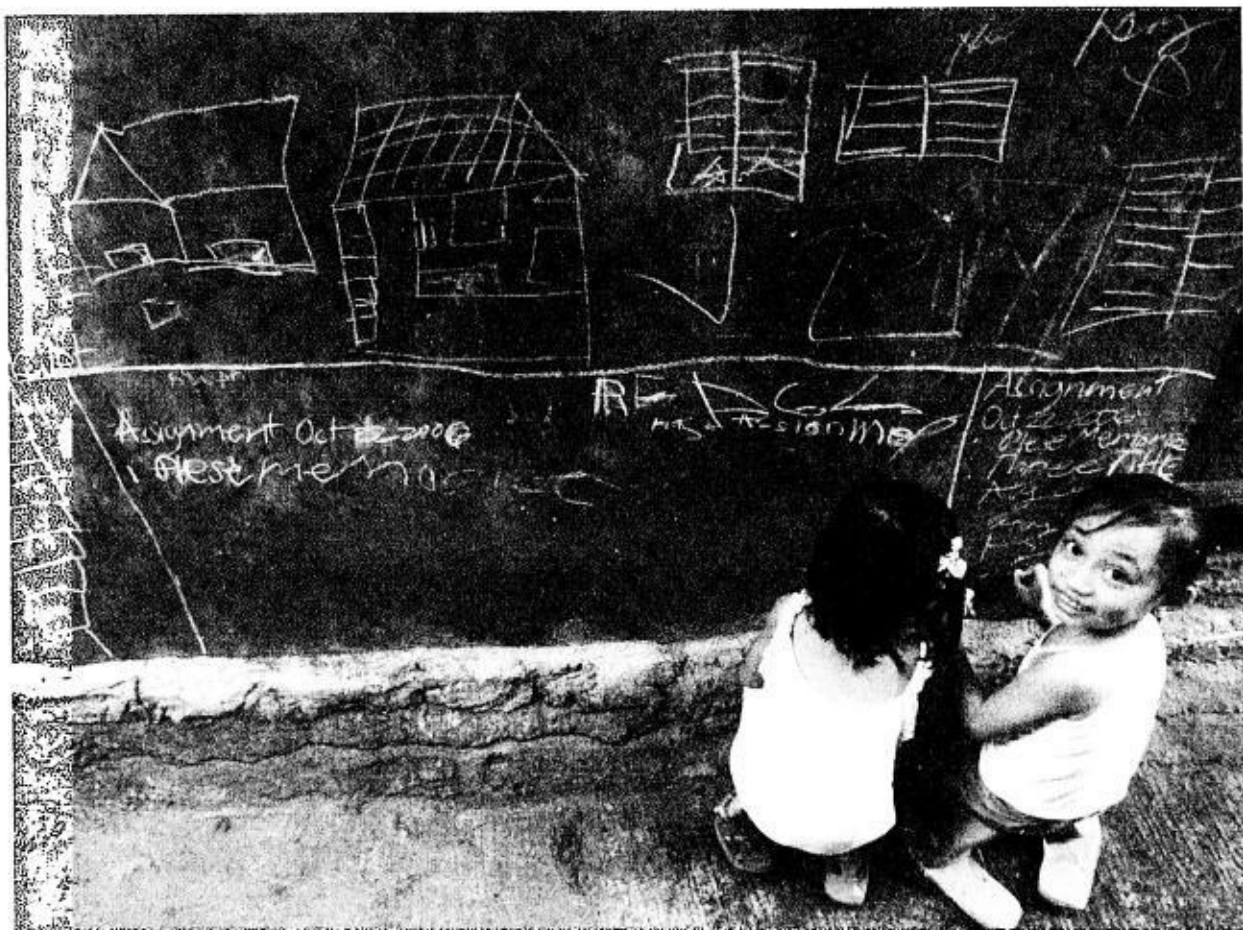
The Dasmariñas (Cavite province) police arrested Garcia on Dec. 20 at the Philippine General Hospital where he

BALLACILLO/A18

PLAY SCHOOL

Two friends use a wall along an alley in Barangay Escopa, Quezon City as a blackboard for their favorite drawings and writing exercises.

RAFFY LERMA



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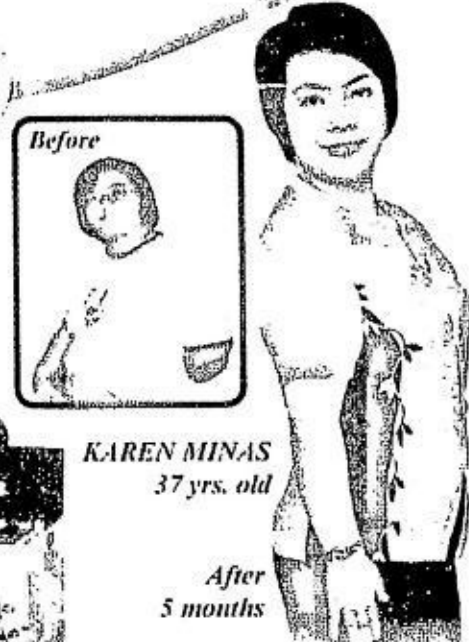
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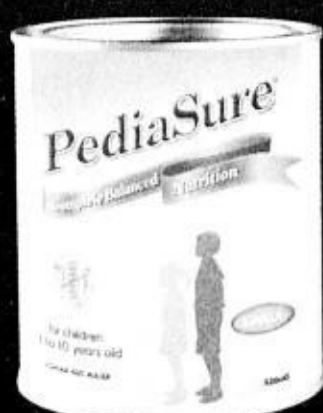


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Answer colleague's charges, Pasay execs told

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SUSPENDED HEAD OF THE Pasay Traffic and Parking Management Office (PTPMO) yesterday expressed confidence that he would win the criminal and administrative cases he filed against newly installed Mayor Allan Panaligan, three city officials and two police officers last year.

The Office of the Ombudsman has instructed Panaligan, city legal officer Joseph Castillo,

lawyers Crisostomo Beltran, Abraham Sia, city hall detachment unit chief Insp. Rodolfo Panaligan and SPO2 Jojo Polanco to answer to charges of grave misconduct, robbery, grave coercion, unlawful arrest and illegal search that Florencio Mateo filed against them in November when they served him his suspension order.

The Ombudsman said it found enough basis to proceed with the investigation of the cases as Ma-

teo's complaints were sufficient in form and substance.

It asked the respondents to submit to the office their respective counter-affidavits and other evidence to the complaints within 10 days.

Their right to respond would be waived if they failed to comply with the order, but the preliminary investigation would proceed, the order read.

"I am confident that the cases I filed against them will prosper.

I have to fight for my rights," Mateo told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Mateo filed the cases with the Ombudsman after his office was "ransacked" by the police, allegedly upon the instructions of Panaligan, while they served the suspension order against him on Nov. 15. He also claimed to have lost P30,000 and a mobile phone during the incident.

Panaligan, then acting mayor, earlier said that he suspended

Mateo on the basis of formal complaints from traffic volunteers and regular staff of the PTPMO claiming that the official had failed to release their salaries and incentives.

Panaligan yesterday said they would comply with the order. But he said that chances of the Ombudsman dismissing the cases were good.

"The cases will not succeed because I don't make decisions without a legal basis," he added.

METROBRIEFS

Down with ads

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is preparing its crew to carry out a Commission on Elections order to dismantle project billboards, greeting streamers and posters of politicians in the interest of fair campaigning. MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday the agency has begun briefing personnel of the Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group on the practical and legal aspects of the task at hand. Also listed among the materials to be removed are project billboards and greeting streamers and posters of incumbents displayed before Jan. 14, the start of election period.

Tarra Quismundo

NBI warning

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation yesterday warned caregivers who intend to work in Japan about illegal recruiters after agents of its regional office in Davao City arrested a Japanese national who allegedly lured applicants into applying for non-existent jobs. Arrested during an entrapment operation the other day were Tsutomu Maniwa and his Filipino partner, Ruby Betita Baltbat. The suspects allegedly recruited several people, among them complainant Ernesto Cempron, who claimed that he gave Maniwa processing and placement fees amounting to P59,000 but failed to send him abroad.

Tina G. Santos

Adopt-a-school

LA SALLE Green Hills has extended its assistance in the management of schools and enhancement of teacher competencies by partnering with the Inuman Elementary School, Maximino L. Gatlabayan Memorial National High School and the latter's Boso-Boso Extension in Antipolo City. Under the school's Adopt-a-School Program, LSGH will provide supervision, consultants and various related outreach projects. The program aims to help the adopted schools enhance teacher competencies through in-service trainings and seminars in key areas, particularly in the teaching of English, Mathematics and Science; improving facilities, and develop areas of cooperation between the adopting and adopted schools.

Las Piñas fields 1,000 volunteer sweepers for zero waste drive

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE CITY OF LAS PIÑAS WILL deploy 1,000 volunteer street sweepers to clean up its main and secondary thoroughfares.

The campaign is part of the city's efforts to maintain cleanliness and achieve the goal of zero waste.

Jimmy Castellano of the Las Piñas public information office said the volunteers, mostly women, would work in three-

hour shifts, from 7-10 a.m. to 3-6 p.m.

"We will give them a daily allowance of least P100," Castellano told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

City Mayor Imelda Aguilar said in a statement that environmental protection and cleanliness would be her top priorities for 2007.

Castellano, however, conceded that the cleanliness campaign wouldn't be as effective without

the cooperation of Las Piñas residents.

"This is also about changing values. We are vigorously implementing our waste segregation programs and teaching households how to manage their waste," he explained.

The city government acquired recently seven new garbage compactor trucks, bringing the total number of the city's dump trucks to 67.

Aguilar said she would ensure

garbage would be regularly collected in the city's 200 subdivisions and villages. Garbage is collected twice a day in Las Piñas.

Homeowners' associations and nongovernment organizations will be organized to participate actively in the cleanliness and beautification campaign.

"We also hope that each barangay will eventually have its own recycling center. That way, there will be less garbage to bring to the dump," Castellano added.

Under Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, each barangay has to have its own materials recovery facility (MRF) for processing of its own waste into useful materials like fertilizers.

Aguilar said that despite the city's limited income, the government would pursue other projects, like the delivery of basic social services and the development of depressed areas into model communities.

Early morning visitor in Mandaluyong

By Emman Cena

WHAT MICHAEL LLANETA MIS- took for an early morning visitor knocking on the front door of his makeshift house on Private Road, Barangay Hulo in Mandaluyong City yesterday, turned out to be a 15-foot python, with a body eight inches in diameter.

Hearing Llaneta's cries for help at about 2 a.m., neighbors came to his rescue and put the snake, suspected to have come from the

drainage beside Llaneta's house, in a sack.

"This strip used to be an estero before residents started building their homes in the area," Llaneta told the INQUIRER.

Shock

Llaneta's wife said she was preparing milk for their baby when she heard a hissing sound.

Llaneta checked who was at the door and was shocked to see the snake banging its head

against their front door.

Despite his initial shock, Llaneta was able to grab a piece of wood and began to hit the python on the head.

"Thank God, it wasn't able to enter our house and get close to our five children," he said.

Llaneta, with the help of four neighbors, put the snake in a sack and brought it to the barangay hall where it remains.

Food hunt

"Pythons show up about every four months in our area. They may be looking around for food," residents said.

Barangay officials said they would hand the snake over to the parks and wildlife office in Quezon City.



NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY Legazpi City

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The National Food Authority Region V invites all interested parties (poultry & hog raisers, feed users, & industrial users) to participate and submit offers to the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) NFA Regional Office, Pier site Legazpi City for the sale through Public Bidding of the following damaged rice stocks at the minimum bid price indicated below on "as-is-where-is" basis:

A. TOTALLY DAMAGED				
Province-Warehouse	Variety-Condition	Volume-Bag	Volume-Kg.	Minimum Bid Price KG
Albay/Tabaco GID	VWEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 1.20
Albay/Tabaco GID	VXCW 62	85	4,241	Php 1.20
Albay/INI A owned	VWLW 62	2,800	140,134.6	Php 1.20
Albay/Bicol Seeds Libon	VCEW 62	600	30,000	Php 1.20
Albay/IRASI Leg City	VBEW 62	3,667	183,000	Php 1.20
Albay/IRASI Leg City	I2AW	179	8,957.6	Php 1.20
SUB-TOTAL		8,326	413,063.2	
B. PARTIALLY DAMAGED				
Province-Warehouse	Variety	Volume-Bag	Volume-Kg.	Minimum Bid Price KG
Albay/Abacorp	VUEW 62	3,000	149,700	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VBLW 62	1,000	49,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VWEW 62	800	39,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VWEW 62	2,200	109,780	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VBEW 62	1,500	74,850	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VUEW 62	1,700	84,630	Php 3.50
Albay/INI A owned Ligao	VCEW 62	807	40,215	Php 3.50
Albay/INI A owned Ligao	VWEW 62	4,000	230,000	Php 3.50
Albay/INI A owned Ligao	PG1-S	79	4,166	Php 3.50
Albay/INI A owned Ligao	PG2-S	9	449.15	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago-Tabaco	VWF 62	2,000	99,800	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago-Tabaco	VXCW 62	500	24,950	Php 3.50
Albay/Bicol Seeds Libon	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/IRASI Leg City	VBEW 62	500	25,000	Php 3.50
Albay/IRASI Leg City	VCEW 62	63	3,150	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		20,758	1,036,690.15	
Camarines Sur GID	VWEF 6	145	7,250.6	Php 3.50
Cam Sur/Baintawak	VCEW 62	1,484	74,209.6	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		1,629	81,460.2	
TOTAL		30,713	1,531,213.55	

The above items may be inspected at the aforesaid warehouses during office hours. Offerors shall be required to post a bid bond equivalent to ten (10%) percent of the total amount based on the bidder's price offer. It shall be in form of Cash, Manager's check or Cashier's check payable to NFA. Bid documents such as tender form, including terms and conditions shall be issued only to interested and qualified bidders upon submission of the Letter of Intent accompanied by the following documents:

- Current NFA Certificate of Registration or license as poultry/hog raiser or as feedmill.
- The poultry/hog raiser or feedmill should have been in operation for at least 2 years.
- Feedmillers must have hammer mill or technical capabilities in case of scientific formulation of feeds.
- Barangay certification where the poultry/hog raising business/feedmill was being operated.
- Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Registration with updated payment (Official Receipt)
- Income Tax Return for year 2005 duly received and stamped by the BIR.
- Financial Statement for the year 2005 duly certified by a CPA.

Representative authorized to transact business with NFA for this particular bidding must present Special Power of Attorney in case of Single Proprietorship or a Board resolution if representing a corporation/partnership. Likewise, a SEC registration is required for corporation/partnership and DTI registration for Single proprietorship.

A non-refundable/non-transferable bidding fee of P 3,000.00 shall be paid by any pre-qualified bidder to defray bidding forms as well as processing cost.

All documents submitted must be duly "authenticated" upon submission otherwise it will not be officially admitted as pre-qualification documents.

Only qualified bidders who passed during the pre-qualification screening will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Deadline for the issuance of bidding documents to pre-qualified bidders shall not be later than 5:00 PM of January 29, 2007.

The National Food Authority Region V shall reserved 25% of the bidden variety for local small poultry and hog raisers.

The pre-bidding conference and bidding proper will be conducted at the NFA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NFA Regional Office, Pier Site, Legazpi City on the following schedules:

Pre-Bidding conference January 30, 2007 10:00 AM

Submission of bids/Opening of Bids January 30, 2007 1:30 PM

For further inquiries/details you may contact the RBAC Secretariat at Telephone Numbers (052) 480-7015, 480-7933, 820-0018.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR FORMALITIES FOUND THEREIN AND ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH OF ITS JUDGEMENT ARE MOST REASONABLE AND MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO NFA. THE RBAC SECRETARIAT IS THE AUTHORITY FOR THE FINAL DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE AS COMPOSED AND APPROVED BY THE NFA ADMINISTRATOR OR HIS DUTY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SHALL BE FINAL.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman



Republic of the Philippines DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT National Capital Region DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
POONG SUNG INCORPORATED 5 East Capitol Drive, Bo. Kapitolyo, Pasig City	Pyung Hyung Lee	President
ASPAC GEN. MERCHANDISE LTD. CO. 816 Pacific Bldg., Quintin Paredes, Rinondo, Manila	Huixiong Wang	Supervisor
NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY 23/F, BPI Buendia Center, Sen. G. Puyat Ave., Makati City	Yvonne Olive Tukotahi	Consular Support Officer
MUTUAL SUCCESS IMPORT-EXPORT INC. 6096 Block 7, Lot 1, Kowloon Industrial Subd., Bo. Ugong, Valenzuela City	Chun-Sheng Wang	Chief Executive Officer
SUMITOMO MITSUI CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD. 2/F Pioneer House Building, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Mukesh Shantilal Asha	Accounting Manager
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA MANILA cor. Ayala and Makati Aves., Makati City	Yusuf Yaran	Executive Pastry Chef
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA MANILA cor. Ayala and Makati Aves., Makati City	Yuko Nakayama	Japanese Guest Relations Officer
PHILIPPINES WORLD SPORTS PROMOTION CO., INC. Unit M, Manila Bay Arcade, Cortabitarte St., Malate, Manila	Cheuk Lee Chili Ng	Administration Supervisor
PHILIPPINES WORLD SPORTS PROMOTION CO., INC. Unit M, Manila Bay Arcade, Cortabitarte St., Malate, Manila	Sze Yu Famous Ng	Marketing Manager
ASIA BREWERY, INC.-MAKATI BRANCH Allied Bank Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chwee Wan Chan	Vice President for Marketing
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Xue Yang	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Rong Sun	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Runping Tan	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Juanhua Luo	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Rong Shu	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kaidong Zhou	Technical Staff
PHILIPPINE EDS TECHNO-SERVICE, INC. 20/F, Olodan Sq., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yasuhiro Suzuki	EED Manager
DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY INCORPORATED 2401 Talt Ave., Malate, Manila	Charles Carl Mann	Faculty Member
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Haiyan Sui	Technical Staff

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTA
Regional Director

Ballacillo slay . . . From page A17

was being treated for gunshot wounds sustained in a robbery attempt in Parañaque three days earlier.

Garcia said he registered at the hospital as Roberto Ventura because he was in hiding after his escape from the Cavite Provincial Jail in 2003.

"The police told me they wouldn't send me to jail immediately. They were just going to transfer me to a hospital under their custody," he said in Filipino.

Interrogation

At the JP Rizal Hospital in Cavite where he was transferred, agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Parañaque police interrogated him, he added.

"Somebody who introduced himself as a member of the CIDG offered me P300,000 to admit to the crime," Garcia alleged.

He said he refused the offer. But nine days later, he was presented to the media at the Southern Police District headquarters at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Later, he was formally charged with double murder and robbery

in the city prosecutor's office.

"I admit to the crime of holdup but not murder, as it is beyond my capacity to do so," he said.

But the NBI expressed confidence they got the man who killed the Ballacillos.

Claim

Investigators said informants heard Garcia bragging about the crimes during a drinking session.

Parañaque police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles also denied the attempted bribery claim.

In a phone interview, he said that Garcia's arrest was based on evidence gathered after a thorough investigation.

Estilles added they did not have P300,000 to offer Garcia.

The police and Parañaque government put up a P200,000 reward for the arrest of the suspected killer.

The national government promised a P1-million reward for information on the murders, which has yet to be released.

The P200,000 reward was divided on Jan. 8 among informants, and police and investigation units that helped in Garcia's arrest.



CAPIZ ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Established 1971

Timpas, Panitan, Capiz, Pils.

tel. nos. (036) 634-0282 to 84; 634-0487; 634-0330; Fax/phone: 634-0264

RE-INVITATION TO BID

The Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) Main Office at Timpas, Panitan, Capiz invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Barangay Electrification Project in Mun. of Tapaz and Jamindan, Capiz as follows:

- Delivery and installation of Forty two (42) channels PV battery charging stations.
- Delivery and installation of Thirty two (32) Solar Home Systems.
- Delivery and installation of Four Hundred Twenty Four (424) balance of system.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00) to the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) main office cashier.

Activities	Schedule
Issuance of bid documents	Jan. 17 to 25, 2007
Deadline of bid submission	Jan. 31, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.
Pre-bidding conference	Jan. 25, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.
Opening of bids	Jan. 31, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.

All interested bidders shall secure from the Department of Energy (DOE) accreditation or certification of good standing aside from the eligibility requirements prescribed by the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) tel. nos. (036) 6340-282; 6340-264; 525-2003 c/o Engr. Jovencio A. Villagrancia.

CAPELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Electric Cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOVENCIO A. VILLAGRANCIA
Chairman

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2007

Violent storms batter Europe, leave 29 dead



HUGE waves lash the port of Wimereux, northern France Jan. 18. The British Isles and Germany were battered Thursday by a severe storm front packing gale-force winds. Rain and violent winds gusting up to 140 kph also lashed northern France.

LONDON—HURRICANE FORCE WINDS battered parts of Europe on Thursday, killing 29 people, including two toddlers, and triggering a dramatic air-sea rescue from a sinking cargo ship in the English Channel.

The storms brought torrential rains and winds gusting at close to 170 kilometers per hour (105 miles per hour) to areas of southern Britain, northern France, the Netherlands, Germany and the Czech Republic.

In all, 12 people were killed in storm-related accidents in England, seven in Germany, five in the Netherlands, three in the Czech Republic and two in France. Many of the deaths were due to traffic accidents and falling debris.

Meteorologists at London's Met Office said the winds reached "severe gale force" as they crossed Britain and were the highest recorded since January 1990.

But they warned that the system would intensify as it headed east across the continent. Winds of almost 170 kph were recorded later Thursday in Germany.

"Denmark, Netherlands and Germany were expected to be more severely affected by the storm as it tracked across them through this evening," the office said on its website.

In Britain, however, the port of Dover reopened Thursday evening after closing for part of the day, and the Eurostar high-speed train company whose services connect London to Paris and Brussels said its operations would re-

turn to normal on Friday, after having been suspended on Thursday.

In Munich, an 18-month-old baby was crushed to death by a door that was torn off its hinges, while a 2-year-old boy was killed when a brick wall collapsed on top of him in north London.

Meanwhile, a 73-year-old man was killed after a barn door fell on him in Bavaria.

Falling trees and pylons claimed the lives of six motorists in Britain, including the managing director of central England's Birmingham airport, killed when a branch fell on his car as he was driving to work. In addition, five elderly men and women were killed here as well.

In the southern Dutch town of Riel an 11-year-old boy died after he was hit by a car, whose driver said the child was blown into the car by a sudden gust.

In the Czech Republic a fireman was killed by a falling tree, while two youths were crushed when a tree fell on their car on the outskirts of the capital Prague.

The high winds caused chaos across the country, cutting power lines and disrupting transport with forecasters warning of worse in store during the night.

Some 20,000 households in Austria were without electricity because of trees falling on power lines, while more than 30,000 households across the northeast of England suffered a similar fate after the storms brought down overhead power lines.

AFP

US House rolls back tax breaks for 'Big Oil'

WASHINGTON—THE NEW DEMOCRATIC-led House of Representatives passed legislation on Thursday aimed at "Big Oil" that would roll back some industry tax breaks and force energy companies to pay more drilling royalties, valued at \$14 billion over 10 years.

Passage of the bill by a vote of 264-163 capped House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's 100-hour agenda, which included measures to raise the minimum wage, lower student loan interest rates and bolster homeland security.

The \$14 billion raised from the additional royalties and repealed tax breaks would fund research for renewable energy sources. The measure must be approved by the Senate and the president before it becomes law.

It is unclear if President George W. Bush would sign the measure. He supports repealing some of the tax breaks but opposes renegotiating royalty contracts.

Going after major integrated US oil firms like Exxon Mobil Corp., Chevron Corp. and ConocoPhillips has been a top priority for the House

Democratic leadership, which says the companies' record profits have come at the expense of US motorists paying high gasoline prices.

"The oil and gas industry is extraordinarily well established and well off," said House Democratic leader Steny Hoyer. "It does not need the American taxpayer's help to be successful or to make a dollar." Republican opponents said the bill would raise US energy costs, and Republican Rep. Roy Blunt of Missouri called it "a win for Opec," referring to the group of oil-exporting nations that produces over a third of the world's oil.

About half the bill's savings comes from eliminating a lower tax rate on oil companies, which will bring in about \$6.5 billion from 2007 to 2016, according to a congressional estimate. The lower tax rate had been given to all US manufacturers in 2004, including oil companies.

The rest of the money would come from a "conservation fee" on oil and gas production that the bill would impose on energy companies that refused to renegotiate faulty leases signed in 1998

and 1999. That would raise about \$7.6 billion.

Republicans and US oil and gas industry groups said such measures would hurt US consumers by making it more expensive to find and produce domestic supplies.

"In reality, the only people it punishes is the American people," said Rep. Dennis Hastert, Illinois Republican and former House speaker.

Rep. Mike Rogers, Michigan Republican, said the bill would require US consumers to import more oil from US nations like Iran and Venezuela, which are both Opec members and foes of US policy.

"If you care about our children, stop sending the money to (Iranian President Mahmoud) Ahmadinejad and (Venezuelan President Hugo) Chavez," Rogers said.

Bush has said big oil companies do not need government help amid historically high oil prices, but opposed forcing energy companies to renegotiate faulty drilling contracts, which as written would allow energy companies to avoid paying about \$10 billion in royalties. *Reuters*

Strange death



Jennifer Strange, 28, of Rancho Cordova, Calif., shown in this undated photo, died of water intoxication after competing in a radio station's contest to see how much water she could drink without going to the bathroom. Strange was found dead Friday in her home hours after taking part in the "Hold Your Wee for a Wii" contest in which KDND 107.9 promised a Nintendo Wii for the winner. *AP*

Vaccine program saves 7 million children from measles death

PARIS—A GOAL TO HALVE DEATHS FROM measles by 2005 compared with their 1999 levels has been exceeded, thanks to a massive effort to immunize children in poor countries, according to a study published on Friday by The Lancet.

The target was set in 2002 by the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children.

The Lancet paper reports that deaths from measles fell by 60 percent, from 873,000 in 1999 to 345,000 at the end of 2005.

The biggest percentage fall was in the Western

Pacific region, with 81 percent, followed by 75 percent in Africa and then the eastern Mediterranean, with 62 percent.

In all, the vaccination campaign prevented 7.5 million deaths, according to the study, authored by experts from the UN's World Health Organization (WHO).

Of that tally, 5.2 million were saved through routine immunization and another 2.3 million were saved by special "catch-up" vaccinations in districts and regions that had been poorly covered.

This supplementary campaign was enormous:

from 2000 to 2005, it reached more than 362 million children aged from nine months to 14 years in 47 targeted countries.

"The achievement of the 2005 global measles mortality reduction goal is evidence of what can be accomplished for child survival in countries with high childhood mortality," the paper says triumphantly.

The key to the success was cost-effective and affordable interventions, "backed by country-level political commitment and effective international partnership." *AFP*

Venezuela solons give Chavez power to rule by decree

CARACAS—VENEZUELAN LEGISLATORS voted unanimously Thursday to grant leftist firebrand President Hugo Chavez the power to rule by decree for 18 months, a week after he began a second six-year term vowing to seek to become president for life.

The bill authorizes Chavez to "rule by decree ... with the force of law," legislative president Cilia Flores said after an unanimous show of hands in favor.

"We welcome this enabling law, with the support of the National Assembly, which backs our leader (Chavez)," she added.

Chavez, in power since 1999, began serving a new term a week ago, with his allies controlling Venezuela's unicameral legislature.

Opponents called the special law a "totalitarian abuse" of power.

But Flores said "there will always be opponents, and especially when they know that these laws will deepen the revolution"—a term Chavez uses to describe his socialist movement.

Chavez is expected to abolish the independence of the Central Bank and to nationalize Venezuela's telecommunications and electrical industries.

He has already announced Venezuela will acquire 51 percent shares in foreign oil operations.

And he has called for the constitution to be changed to lift any limit on presidential terms.

Chavez has piqued the ire of the United States with his fierce anti-US rhetoric, his affinity for Cuban leader Fidel Castro and his warm relations with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who visited Venezuela over the weekend.

Washington also accuses Chavez of destabilizing Latin America, where the presidents of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay all have leftist leanings.

Chavez's plans include changing the official name of the country, to the "Socialist Republic of Venezuela" and adding a stanza to the national anthem lauding Simon Bolivar, the "Liberator" of much of South America from Spain and an inspiration to most Venezuelan presidents. *AFP*



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST "MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONSULTANT" AND "VILLAGE HYDRO ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAM ADVISOR"

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
RURAL POWER PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES
GEF Grant No. TF052188-PH

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Energy (DOE) with grant assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), is implementing the Rural Power Project (RPP). The RPP aims to support reforms and priority investments to meet the needs of rural communities for adequate, affordable and reliable energy services.

Recognizing the generally low incomes of dispersed users and the still high capital costs of PV systems, the project provides, through GEF and government funds, subsidies to lower the cost to consumers, and financing to spread out the payments. The suppliers offer PV system options (e.g. 10-100 Wp) sufficient to provide basic services to households. Competing vendors would be enticed to do business through incentives that include assistance in market development and capacity building, product promotions and other risk-reducing activities funded by the proposed GEF grants in order to reduce the critical barriers of PV market development. GEF grants are leveraged with government subsidies to render PV systems affordable for the rural poor. Further, to remove the barrier of credit access, the Project has established a line of credit to financial intermediaries (such as rural banks and micro-finance institutions) to enable them to provide consumer loans for the PV systems and financing of incremental working for dealers.

RPP is also supporting the development of mini-micro-grid based rural electrification systems especially those using renewable energy technologies such as mini-hydro, micro-hydro, and biomass systems. Specifically, under this sub-component, Village Hydro Electrification (VHE) Program was launched. The VHE Program encourages off-grid electrification of remote villages using hydro power systems in accordance to well-established best practices in implementing sustainable VHE projects, both local and international. RPP provides various forms of incentives, including grants, to VHE project developers and technology providers. DOE has incorporated QTP approach into the VHE Program as the main strategy to ensure project sustainability and improved quality of service to off-grid communities.

In the implementation of the RPP, the RPP-PMO now seeks the services of the following consultants:

1. **Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant** – The assignment is to design and implement the RPP M&E system and activities. The M&E system will enable the tracking of the project's progress, contribute to the opportune identification of problems and solutions and provide the data that will demonstrate the outcomes that can be attributed to the project's investments
2. **VHE Program Advisor** – To undertake the subject Consultancy Services with the objective of assisting DOE in the implementation of the VHE Program including, but not limited to, the following tasks: (i) establishment of institutional, technical and financial standards and guidelines for developing and implementing VHE projects; (ii) design of capacity building program to enhance the capacities of all VHE program stakeholders especially VHE project developers and technology providers; (iii) identification of at least ten (10) pilot projects and another twenty (20) scale-up projects that will receive grant assistance and other support from RPP

RPP-PMO invites eligible individual Consultants, either local or international, to indicate their interest in providing the services. Each interested Consultant must provide information indicating that he/she is qualified to perform the services by submitting the following: (1) latest Curriculum Vitae; (2) a brief write-up of his/her qualifications related to the assignment, to include expertise and at least ten (10) years of experience in the practice of VHE program formulation, design and implementation of successful VHE projects, keen understanding of the elements of technical and financial standards for VHE projects, evaluation of VHE project proposals, etc., and, (3) description of similar assignments and work experience, if any. This assignment is deemed "URGENT" and, if selected, the Consultant must be immediately available for work as soon as possible.

The Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers published in January 1977 (revised in September 1977, January 1999 and May 2002). Interested Parties may obtain further information from the contact person and address below during office hours 0800 to 1700 hours and submit their Expression of Interest on or before 30 January 2007 (up to 5:00 p.m.).

MYLENE C. CAPONGCOL
Project Director, Rural Power Project
Department of Energy
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Numbers 840-2120 or 8401401 local 132
Fax Numbers: 8402252, 8402120 or 8405593
Email Address mycaps@doe.gov.ph & pmo@rpp.com.ph

(PDI-Jan 20, 2007)



National Transmission Corporation
Republic of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Design, Build, Supply & Installation of a 3 Phase
Central UPS & Emergency Back-up Power Supply (Genset)
[Reference No.: PB060922-EL0131 (PB2)]

1. The National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the CY 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board, intends to apply the sum of P 4,200,000.00 being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Design, Build, Supply & Installation of a 3 Phase Central UPS & Emergency Back-up Power Supply (Genset). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The TRANSCO-HO now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for UPS & Genset. Delivery of the GOODS is required within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as: the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting January 19, 2007 to February 9, 2007 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (P 1,000.00). The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 29, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. at the same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 P.M. of February 12, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Php 42,000.00
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Php 63,000.00
3. Surety Bond (2.5% of ABC)	Php 105,000.00
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	Php 4,200,000.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on February 12, 2007 2:00 P.M. at the Admin Conference Room same address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The National Transmission Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg
Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road,
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812235 • Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - January 20, 2007)

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Somalia has best chance for peace in years, says UN

MOGADISHU—THE TOP UN ENVOY TO SOMALIA, making his first visit since a war last month, said on Thursday the Horn of Africa nation now had its best chance to end 16 years of anarchy and bloodshed.

Francois Lonseny Fall, special representative of the UN secretary-general, flew into Mogadishu two weeks after Ethiopian and Somali government troops swept aside Islamists who had run most of southern Somalia for six months.

"This is the best opportunity for peace for 16 years in Somalia and we must not waste it," Fall said after meeting interim President Abdullahi Yusuf at the bullet and shell-marked presidential palace, Villa Somalia.

"I want to congratulate you. To see the president in Villa Somalia is

a very important step," he told Yusuf, who came to the capital last week for the first time since being appointed in 2004 after peace talks in Kenya.

The white-washed, hilltop compound was the seat of former dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, whose 1991 overthrow plunged the country into years of violence, chaos and poverty.

Escorted by a mix of UN guards and Somali government forces wielding AK-47s, Fall urged Yusuf, other government leaders and civil

society groups to reach out to opponents and build an all-inclusive administration to avoid further conflict.

"There has been a lot of crime, a lot of devastation, but if you look back and say 'this man killed my son or husband' you will never be reconciled in this country," Fall said. "We should leave the judgement to God. Only Allah can judge everybody." Ethiopia is eager to pull out its troops and there is wide concern about a vacuum unless African peacekeepers can be brought in to safeguard stability and protect the government.

The United Nations has endorsed such a force in principle, but so far only Uganda has publicly pledged to contribute troops and other nations are wary of the risks.

Until the war, the government

was confined to the southern town of Baidoa and in danger of being overrun by a militant Islamist movement born out of sharia courts in Mogadishu.

Now installed in the coastal capital, it faces a mammoth task to pacify one of the world's most lawless and gun-infested states. As well as the threat of guerrilla strikes from surviving Islamist forces, the government needs to reconcile feuding clans and keep in check a host of former warlords.

"The will of the international community and of the UN is to see a reconciled Somalia. The road is still long and we still have a lot to do," Fall, a soft-speaking former prime minister of Guinea, told Yusuf. "We don't want any more warlords in Somalia. We will not tolerate that. We want a government." *Reuters*



CROWN Princess Masako with daughter Princess Aiko in photo taken last September. *AFP*

Depressed Japan princess a palace prisoner, says book

By Mie Kohiyama

TOKYO—FOR THE PAST three years the health problems of Princess Masako, wife of Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito, have kept her out of the public eye while making her a subject of fascination.

In an unauthorized biography on the woman sometimes compared to Britain's Princess Diana, Australian investigative journalist Ben Hills says Masako is receiving the best of medical care—but predicts she will continue to suffer.

"Princess Masako: Prisoner of the Chrysanthemum Throne" was published in November in Australia and a month later in the US. It will be published in Japanese around March.

It tells the story of Masako Owada, a former diplomat who speaks several foreign languages and had a brilliant career ahead of her when she agreed—not without hesitation—to marry Crown Prince Naruhito in 1993.

Overnight, as tradition dictates, she had to give up her family name and her right to vote, and submit herself to the rigid protocols of the court, overseen by the Imperial Household Agency—a bureau of more than 1,000 civil servants tasked with watching over the 23 members of the royal family.

"I remember writing at that time that I just couldn't understand why a smart educated woman would want to bury herself in this medieval monastery," recalled Hills, who was then a Tokyo-based correspondent for Australian newspapers.

The journalist followed Masako's life in Japan, and at Harvard and Oxford where she studied.

The palace repeatedly turned down his requests for an interview with Masako, telling him it had never been done. The household agency also refused to talk to AFP about the book.

Hills said he spoke to around 60 people including royal experts and journalists, as well as people close to Masako and the royal family.

From his interviews, he was able to pull together a profile of Masako's complex personality which he describes as "brilliant and fragile." He traces her itinerant childhood, during which she lived in Russia and the US as her family followed the diplomatic and academic career of her "strict and ambitious" father Hisashi Owada, now a judge on the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

It goes into stellar academic achievements and diplomatic career in which she shone and was earmarked for success.

But the fairytale ended after her marriage to the prince as she came under intense pressure to produce a male heir to the world's oldest monarchy.

Hills says Masako underwent hormone treatment and conceived her daughter Aiko, who was born after nine years of marriage, through in vitro fertilization.

In support of this claim, he points to the palace's appointment in 2000 of an IVF specialist, Osamu Tsutsumi.

In September, Masako's sister-in-law Princess Kiko, the wife of the emperor's second son Prince Akishino, gave birth to Prince Hisahito, the first boy born to the family in four decades.

The royal birth has eased some pressure on Masako, Hills says. But she has not yet completely recovered from her illness, a fact recognized by the palace.

Masako, who turned 43 in December, has not fully resumed her official duties and is still receiving medical treatment.

"She is now receiving good modern treatment. She is receiving some drugs, she has an accomplished psychiatrist," Hills said.

"But even if he manages to bring her back, the palace pressure comes as a rollercoaster. She will keep having her ups and downs. She is never alone. Never." Hills believes only divorce or a decision by Naruhito to give up his claim to the throne would bring Masako the freedom he says she craves. *AFP*

UK advertisers pull out over racism complaints

LONDON—A SPONSOR DROPPED support for Britain's "Celebrity Big Brother" television reality show following thousands of complaints that Indian film star Shilpa Shetty was the target of racial abuse, though she declared that race was not the reason she has clashed with housemates.

Channel 4 Chief Executive Andy Duncan insisted on Thursday that the reality show would continue, saying it was unclear if the abuse was racist.

Regulatory agency OFCOM said it had received 27,000 complaints by Thursday afternoon about alleged racial abuse by several contestants targeting Shetty.

Throughout the show, Shetty, 31, has repeatedly been reduced to tears by Goody, who has called the actress

cooking untrustworthy, mocked her accent and complained about her "screaming." Another contestant said Indians were thin because they undercooked their food.

Anger has erupted in India, as well, with newspapers there featuring the story on front pages. Indian and British leaders both have been compelled to comment on the issue, expressing concern at the alleged racism.

The British regulator agency plans to state its concerns to Channel 4, but it would be the broadcaster's responsibility to take action, Chief Executive Ed Richards said.

"Clearly, what is happening is very serious. Any allegation of racism is very serious," Richards said.

Hertfordshire police said they were investigating allegations of



SHETTY

racist behavior in the "Big Brother" house, north of London.

"We will continue to liaise with OFCOM and with (production company) Endemol, whom we have strongly encouraged to ensure that any form of behavior that could raise similar concerns does not occur," the department said. *AP*

Baghdad bombs kill 19

BAGHDAD—SIX CAR BOMBS killed at least 19 people across Baghdad on Thursday as Iraq's prime minister urged the United States to give Iraqi forces more weapons and said he could bring security in three to six months if they did.

Three bombs in quick succession killed at least 10 people and wounded 30 in a wholesale vegetable market in the violent southern district of Dora, police said.

Earlier, a car bomb in Saadoun Street, a main commercial thoroughfare, killed four people and wounded 10. Two others killed two and three people respectively in the mainly Shiite east of the city. One went off near a police station. *Reuters*

Floods amid drought

CANBERRA—AS bushfires and drought fed in part by climate change ravage Australia's southeast, heavy rains are bringing rare flooding to the country's desert interior.

The usually dry Todd River passing through the outback capital of Alice Springs was awash with floodwater on Friday, closing roads to motorists and tourists.

"Central Australia, the desert, it's just lush green grass and there's water everywhere, and the river's flowing. It's strange, it's very weird," Alice Springs council spokesperson Trevor Packham told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio. *Reuters*

Olmert refuses to resign over Lebanon war failures

JERUSALEM—PRIME MINISTER EHUD Olmert and his defense minister resisted growing pressure Thursday to follow Israel's military chief of staff and resign over failures of last year's war on Hezbollah.

When asked whether Olmert, his ratings approaching single digits and facing a criminal corruption probe, would follow Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz's example and quit, a senior aide told AFP: "No, he has no such intention." Defense Minister Amir Peretz, who most observers in Israel predict will be the next head to roll over the inconclusive 34-day war on Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, was just as adamant.

"As defense minister, my intention is to continue the mission," he was quoted as saying during a speech at a naval graduation ceremony late Wednesday.

But a day after Halutz became the most senior official to step down over the inconclusive 34-day war, pressure grew on Olmert and Peretz to

follow suit.

An opinion poll released Thursday showed 50 percent of Israelis in favor of Olmert stepping down and a staggering 71 percent who thought the defense minister should quit.

Some 58 percent favored holding early elections, just eight months after Olmert's coalition officially assumed power following March 2006 elections.

Olmert, 61, who was listed by Time magazine less than a year ago as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, today faces approval ratings of just 14 percent.

The war on Hezbollah, launched after the Shiite militia seized the two soldiers in a cross-border raid on July 12, had raised a storm of outrage in Israel following the UN-brokered ceasefire that took effect in mid-August.

The conflict killed more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers, and more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians. *AFP*

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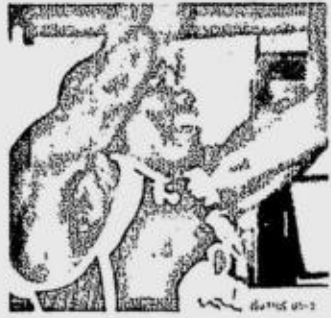


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WHAT'S INSIDE
Do or die
 for Spinners,
 Pop Kings /A22

SPORTS

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E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Serena turns
 back time in
 Australian
 Open/A23



YUPAPORN Kawinpakorn (right) and her caddie react as the Thai teenager holes the winning putt on the 18th hole.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Thai teenager captures RP Ladies crown by 2

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—THAI TEEN ACE YUPAPORN KAWINPAKORN played steady in the clutch yesterday, shooting a final round one-over-par 73 to bag the ICTSI Philippine Ladies title at The Country Club here.

The dusky, 17-year-old Kawinpakorn cushioned a double bogey-5 on the 11th with a birdie on No. 15 to break out of a tie with Lidya Ivana Jaya of Indonesia and Ainil Johani Abu Bakar of Malaysia and seal the win with a 36-hole 210 total.

Jaya and Abu Bakar, six shots off the Thai overnight, shot identical 69s, despite losing steam in the stretch. They settled for a tie for second with identical 212 aggregates.

It was the biggest career win for Kawinpakorn, who wrested the lead

with a record-tying 66 in the second round on Thursday.

Cebuana Kathleen Uy, meanwhile, never got it going on the exclusive layout's tricky greens, three-putting six times for an 80. She finished in joint seventh spot, 10 strokes off Kawinpakorn.

"It was my first time playing in a championship flight," said Uy who was paired with Kawinpakorn. "I'm just going to charge it to experience."

Uy shot two straight 70s to trail the eventual winner by three head-

ing into yesterday's final round.

She flies back to California today to continue her studies at the University of San Francisco.

Fil-American Cristina Corpus, who started the day just four shots behind, wound up in solo fourth after a 75 and a level 216 total.

Dottie Ardina, the 13-year-old RP women's team standout, fired a 71 to finish in a fifth-place tie with Indonesian Agnes Retno Sudjasmin and Del Monte's Crystal Shin (73) at 217.

Former winner and pre-tourna-

ment favorite Carmelette Villaro-man matched par for the first time but still finished 15 shots off.

Mia Piccio, the 15-year-old runner-up in last year's RP Women's math play, skied to a 79, her chances of a comeback evaporating after a 40 in the frontside. She started the day tied with Ardina.

Asian Games veteran Anya Tancinco, also a native of Bacolod like Piccio, never got it going in the tournament, her final-round 79 giving her a 230 tally and a woeful 25th place finish.

POC to weed out weak athletes from RP pool

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE is set to streamline the roster of athletes, a process equal to separating grain from the chaff.

The POC will create profiles of athletes with the help of the national sports associations in order to fully determine worth and potentials.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. said the process would help the Olympic body identify athletes in the training pool who either have the potential to be elevated to the national team or be scratched off from the official roster.

Cojuangco explained that removing athletes who failed to improve through the years would open slots

for medal winners in the Philippine Olympic Festival, one of the POC's talent identification programs.

There are 800 athletes or so from the 45 NSAs with majority of them belonging to the training pool.

"The Olympic festival will be a rich source of talents that would infuse new blood into the national team," said Cojuangco.

"With the guidance of POC executive board members and the coordination of the NSAs, we could make a profile of athletes to pave the way for the streamlining of the national and training pool rosters."

The POF, which intends to sweep the countryside for potential talents, will hold preliminary tournaments in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

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New system to attack 'cancer in horseracing'

By Musong R. Castillo

HORSES WILL HANDICAP THEMSELVES; there will be no incentives for losers.

To get rid of the "cancer in the system," the Philippine Racing Commission yesterday released details of a new handicapping scheme that it feels would best serve all sectors of the horseracing industry.

The "no going-down-in-group" policy will be enforced on all two- and three-year-old horses that would start their careers starting Apr. 1.

This is a significant departure from the old system which Philracom chair Florencio Fianza feels is back-tracking the development of the industry.

"We will let the horses handicap themselves," Fianza said in a press briefing yesterday. "We will see fairer races, because there will be no incentive for (a horse) losing."

Jockey factor

"We can also eliminate the human (jockey) factor so prevalent at this time."

Under the new system, horses coming in Apr. 1 this year onwards will fall in the Juvenile Division if it is a two-year-old, and in the 3YO Special Division if it is a three-year-old.

There, each will be made to run only one maiden race—win or lose—before falling into their respective brackets, the winners and placers and the non-placers for both groups.

All of them will be campaigning in their respective "age brackets" until they graduate to four-year-olds and join the old class-division system, which Fi-

anza boldly hoped "would die a natural death."

Sandbagging tactics

The old practice allowed horses to "go down in groups" after losing a certain number of consecutive races and being inactive for a certain period of time.

This has resulted in "sandbagging" tactics as horses that go down in groups win against overmatched foes several times before graduating to the next level, and losing a certain number again and going down once more.

Eduardo Domingo Jr., a former ace jockey who now serves as Philracom commissioner, also said during a luncheon yesterday that the new system will benefit the jockeys as well.

"They will now ride to win, instead of mounting an entry thinking how to lose," he explained.

The new system will still allow these juveniles and 3YOs to campaign in the regular Open Stakes.

The Philracom has also jacked up prizes for these divisions to close to P20 million for this year alone.

Do or die for Spinners, Pop Kings

A STRONGER ENDGAME SHOULD DO WONDERS FOR MAGNOLIA ICE CREAM when it battles Kettle Korn-UST in the first knockout phase of the PBL Silver Cup today at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym.

Coach Koy Banal said he expects continued progress from the Spinners in the 3:30 p.m. encounter at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym.

The winner of the do-or-die tiff will face fifth-ranked Henkel Sista in the second knockout phase next week.

A pre-tournament favorite, the Spinners could only eke out three wins in 10 games for an eighth-place ledger in the classification round.

But for Banal, his wards got a "good confidence booster" when the Spinners drubbed the favored Henkel Sista, 68-49, last Tuesday.

"We just have to focus on our execution down the stretch," said Banal. "Most of our losses were closely fought, they were tightly contested. Our problem had been our end game. But we cannot use inexperience or immaturity as an excuse."

Meanwhile, Kettle Korn-UST could only blame lack of experience for their dismal maiden campaign.

Winless in 10 games, the Pop Kings have also been missing key players—including top gunner Jojo Duncin—due to various injuries recently.

Derrick Hubalde stepped up last Thursday, but his 20-point effort wasn't enough as

STANDINGS	W	L
Harbour	7	3
Mail N More	7	3
Hapee	7	3
Toyota Otis	7	3
Henkel Sista	6	4
TeleTech	4	6
Pera Padala	4	6
Magnolia	3	7
Kettle Korn	0	10

GAME TODAY
(E. Aguinaldo College Gym)
3:30 p.m.—Magnolia
vs Kettle Korn-UST

the Pop Kings bowed to Harbour Centre, 103-77.

The Spinners, on the other hand, got good results when Bonbon Custodio finally flashed his wares last Tuesday.

Custodio, a former University of the East standout, pumped in 19 points on a 75 per cent shooting versus Henkel Sista.

"He had been working so hard," said Banal.

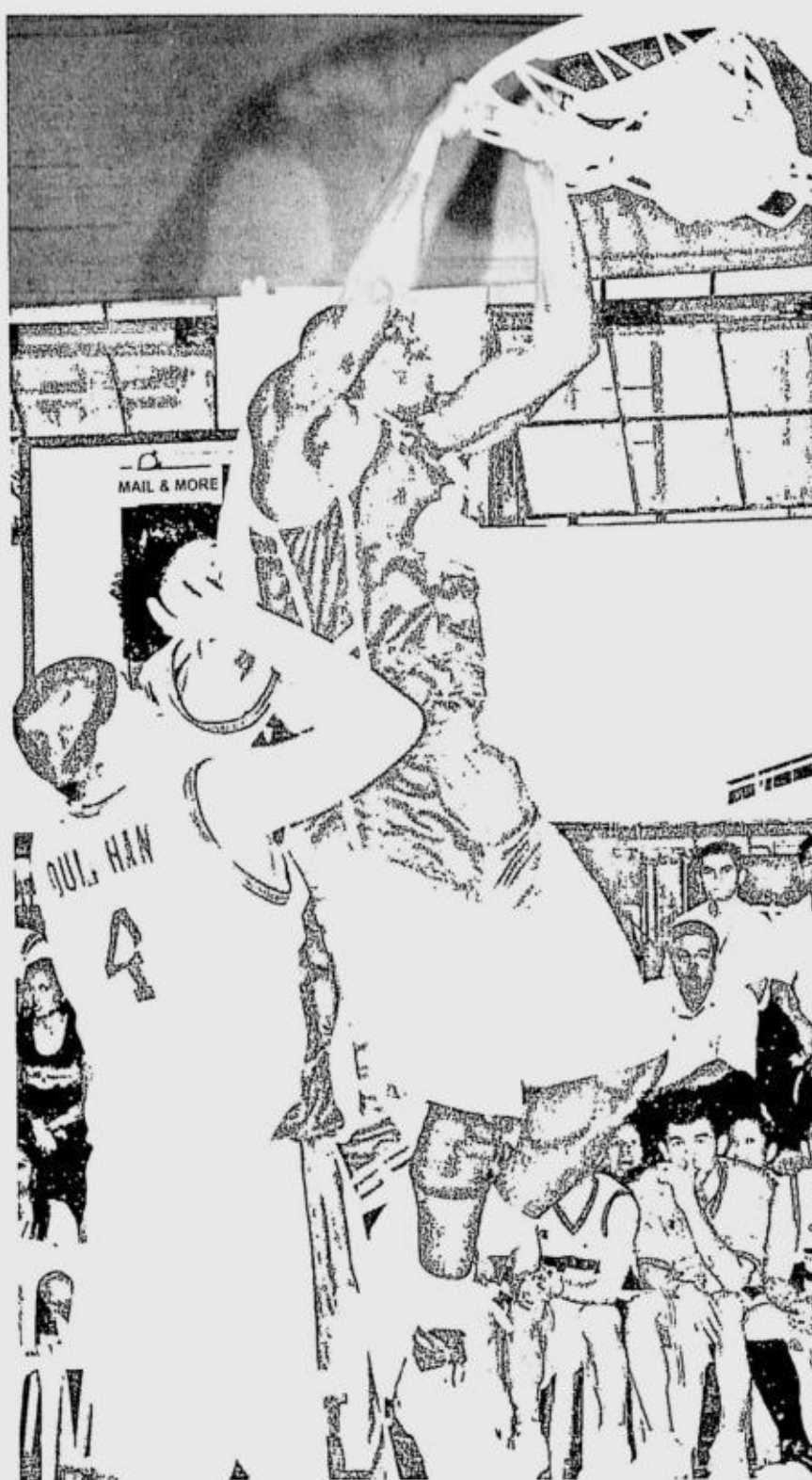
Magnolia will also turn to Nigerian center Sam Ekwe, Jeff Chan, Jonas Villanueva and Yousif Aljamal to duplicate its blowout win over Kettle Korn-UST, 97-74, last November.

Before the second knockout phase, four teams will fight for the two outright semifinal slots on Tuesday. Harbour Centre, Mail and More, Hapee-PCU and Toyota Otis finished with similar 7-3 records.

In their playoff matches, the winners will advance to the semifinals, while the losing teams will settle for the twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals.

Harbour Centre, which claimed the top spot due to a superior quotient, will dispute the bonus versus Toyota Otis. Mail and More will take on Hapee-PCU in the other pairing.

Jasmine W. Payo



MAGNOLIA'S tower of power Sam Ekwe slams it in during a recent game. The Nigerian ace will be a marked man against Kettle Korn-UST today. ERIK ARAZAS

High hopes for RP cage mission in Geneva

THE FOUR-MAN FILIPINO TEAM AIMING to convince the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) to lift its suspension on the country arrived in high spirits in Geneva, Switzerland, 9 a.m. Friday morning.

"It was a long trip but we landed in one piece," said PLDT's Ricky Vargas, Talk 'N Text's governor and chair of the PBA board.

The group is headed by PLDT chief Manny V. Pangilinan, president of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) that has been working to establish itself as the national federation for basketball in the country.

The group that checked into the Mandarin Hotel fronting the famous Rhone River is made up of Pangilinan, Vargas, former Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) president Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

They were scheduled to proceed to the Fiba headquarters for a 4:30 p.m. conference with Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann.

'Breakthrough conference'

"This is going to be a breakthrough conference," a member of the group said as they departed for Switzerland.

The meeting with Baumann will be the first of two meetings the group will have with Fiba officials.

After meeting with Baumann, the group will next meet with the Fiba sec-gen anew, this time with the body's president, Bob Elphinstone, who is flying from Australia to join the conference.

The SBP group is hoping to participate in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships in July, which will serve as ticket to the Fiba-Asia tournament, the official Olympic qualifying tournament for Asia.

Cebu world title go for Gorres Feb. 24



GORRES

CEBU CITY—Z GORRES GETS AN earlier crack at World Boxing Organization (WBO) super flyweight champion of Fernando Montiel on Feb. 24, ahead of the original March 4 fight date.

International promoter Sammy Gellon yesterday said that the mandatory fight, originally part of the postponed March 4 World Cup, will still take place at the Cebu City Sports Complex.

The Montiel-Gorres title fight gets a big boost with the inclusion in the card of the undefeated Rey "Boom Boom"

Bautista who will take on a Latino foe.

The World Cup had to be postponed to the middle of this year to allow more time for negotiations with handlers of the two other world titlists in the card.

Montiel was, however, forced to face Gorres right at the latter's home turf after Gellon-ani won the purse bid over Top Rank's Bob Arum for the right to stage the mandatory fight.

WBO president Paco Valcarcel has stamped his approval for the fight to take place, with Montiel getting 75 per-

cent of the winning bid submitted by promoter Gellon-ani in Puerto Rico.

Meanwhile, Mark Jason Melligan and Czar Amonsot will get a crack at WBO Asia Pacific titles on Feb. 9 in Seoul against separate Korean opponents.

The Bacolod City-raised Melligan, a former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist, will take on a soon-to-be named South Korean foe for the WBO Asia Pacific junior welterweight title.

Amonsot (17-2-1, 10 KO's) will fight as a lightweight against another Korean.

Cantada teams up for last time with Tanpinco

GERARD CANTADA AND JR TANPINCO WILL pair for the last time this year in the Konica-Minolta National Pro-Am Golf championship set Feb 7 to 10 at The Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

Cantada and Tanpinco, who will gun for an unprecedented fourth straight title, will lose their partnership next year should Cantada hit the Top 30 rankings after the 2007 season.

A new tournament rule states that a professional listed in the Top 30 cannot pair with an amateur having an index of five or below.

Cantada is No. 29 this year and Tanpinco should easily be a handicap -5 or below since he has been a consistent finisher in the RP amateur and a former member of the national pool.

"Their exemption is good only this year," said retired Commodore Danny Pizarro. "Unless Gerard drops in the standings next year, he cannot pair again with JR even if they win again."

A total of P1.7 million is at stake in the tournament that offers the brand-new model Toyota Avanza as a hole-in-one prize in the Celebrity event on Feb. 6.

The state-of-the-art Altis is up for grabs as a hole-in-one prize in the tournament proper.

Cantada, who might skip the Philippine Open Feb 1-4 to concentrate on defending the Konica-Minolta Pro-Am with Tanpinco, is awaiting the arrival of Tanpinco from San Diego, California.



MANNY Pacquiao and NBC sec-gen Tito Palma formalize the entry of the boxing hero's team with a handshake in Gen. Santos City. With them are (from left) team consultant Julieto Cagumay, assistant manager Romy Neri, manager Raides Neri and team official Wayne Gagarin.

Pacquiao quint joins NBC

MANNY PACQUIAO TRIES TO EXTEND HIS dominance from the boxing ring to the basketball court when his MP Warriors Gensan sees action in the National Basketball Conference (NBC).

The world's 2006 Fighter of the Year signed a memorandum of agreement with NBC secretary general Tito Palma at Pacquiao's mansion in Gen. Santos City recently, making the country's tuna capital the newest member of the regional cagefest.

"My team will play as hard as I do when I'm in

the ring, and try to win friends off the court," said Pacquiao.

Team manager Raides Neri and his assistant, Romy Neri Jr. joined Pacquiao in the signing ceremony.

NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and league executive vice president Mayor Bamol Tolentino welcomed the new development.

Pacquiao's team hopes to make a big impact when NBC kicks off its fourth season on March 10 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.

SPORTSWATCH

KidzHoops registration extended

REGISTRATION FOR THE ONLY COMMUNITY-INSPIRED BASKETBALL tournament in the country has been extended until this Sunday. Because of the large turnout of participants during the leveling day last Sunday, tournament organizers have decided to accommodate more teams in the 11-under division. For inquiries, call 371-0639 or text 0917-2779134. For online registration, log on to www.kidzhoops.com.

Sinulog poker tourney gets going

THE FIRST SINULOG TEXAS HOLD'EM NO LIMIT POKER TOURNAMENT kicks off today at the Teatro Casino of the Waterfront Hotel and Casino, Lahug, Cebu City. The tournament is open to all poker enthusiasts and hopes to produce another World Poker Tour champion after Cebu's very own Noli Francisco. The tournament and registrations fees are P5,000 and P500, respectively. There will be unlimited re-buys for the first hour and 30 minutes for P5,000. Guaranteed prize is at least P500,000. Registration starts at 12 noon and ends at 3 p.m. The tournament is backed by Dell Advertising and Promotions headed by Dr. Wendell Villacin in cooperation with Casino Filipino-Cebu. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko Foundation.

Banner roster in SJC int'l 8-cocker

TWELVE MORE COCKERS BEAT THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE YESTERDAY for the much-awaited SJC 8-Cock International Derby slated Jan. 22, 24 and 26 at the San Juan Coliseum. With a big cast of 130 participants, the event, backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, looms as a super showdown of cockfighting heavyweights. Action starts on Monday featuring the 2-cock elimination round. The team of Mayor Jesry Palmares, Ricoy Palmares, Rep. Iggy Arroyo and Arnold Mendoza, fresh off their victory in the NCA World Championship Derby last week, signed up yesterday and will field their remaining Bobby Fairchild fighters in a bid to extend their winning streak. For inquiries, call the SJC office at 725-5369 or 725-6563.

Makati Int'l Derby lures top cockers

THE FIRST MAKATI 8-COCK INTERNATIONAL DERBY YESTERDAY DREW three of the country's finest cockers-breeders with the entry of the team of former ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares and Richard Bates which will be fielding three entries for the event slated Feb. 5, 7 and 9 at the Makati Coliseum. Backed by B-Meg Derby Ace Premium Formula and Gran Matador, the international cockfest will be handled by promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. According to Salud, the Binangonan Balbina team of Cojuangco, Ynares and Bates enjoys an advantage in terms of fowl selection since Cojuangco currently has more than 10,000 gamecocks, undisputedly the biggest in the world. Earlier, four leading cockers from Hawaii—Robert Dadis, Peter Sarte, Randy Tanaka and Randy Jugas—confirmed their participation.

51 fights in Las Piñas hackfest today

FIFTY-ONE MATCHES ARE ON TAP IN A SPECIAL 3-COCK DERBY THAT kicks off at 7 p.m. today at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Laguna breeder Mimi Itchon and Rocky Clave are hosts of the event that offers P250,000 to the winners for an entry fee of P5,500. Official entries must be presented from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. today at the LPC office. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910. The "LPC Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan," with coliseum manager Alex Tobias and Yoyoy Dahonog as hosts, sizzles on Jan. 25. The fastest-win champion after every 10 fights will get P20,000. Meanwhile, the crowd-drawing "Pintakasi Hacklights" starts at 8 a.m. at the venue tomorrow.

Serena turns back time

Federer, Nadal, Mauresmo continue advance of Aussie Open top seeds



MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—SERENA WILLIAMS GOT a lesson Friday in how the rest of women's tennis has closed the onetime power gap that she and her sister created.

Then she showed that she can still teach a few things about closing out a match as she advanced to the fourth round of the Australian Open by rallying to knock off fifth-seeded Nadia Petrova, 1-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Top-ranked Roger Federer gave a schooling to 25th-seeded Mikhail Youzhny, beating last year's US Open semifinalist, 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (5).

No. 5 Andy Roddick was meeting 2005 men's champion Marat Safin in a night match.

Second-seeded Amelie Mauresmo, the defending women's champion, beat the Czech Republic's Eva Birnerova and next plays Lucie Safarova, who won the first set before Anastasiya Yakimova retired with a back injury. No. 3 Svetlana Kuznetsova beat fellow Russian Maria Kirilenko and No. 7 Elena Dementieva advanced over Maria Elena Camerin of Italy. Also advancing were No. 10 Nicole Pietrangeli and No. 16 Shahar Peer.

The victory over Petrova was impressive for Williams, who is unseeded after playing only four tournaments last year due to a chronic knee injury and dropped out of the top 100 for the first time since 1997 before climbing back to 95th in the year-end rankings.

She was shocked to hear she had just beaten a top 10 player for the first time since she dethroned Mauresmo in the final here two years ago for her seventh Grand Slam title.

"Has it been that long? That's a terrible stat," Williams said, shaking her head in disbelief.

Still, it was far from clear who was really the favorite when they took the court. While Williams clearly has some way to go to return to the domination that she and sister Venus exerted over women's tennis a

few years ago, other players have labeled her one of the most dangerous competitors when she's fit.

Petrova has never reached the final of a major, but she raced through the first set and was serving for the match at 5-3 in the second. Then Williams found another gear.

"I really had no other option than for my game to go up," Williams said. "I was down 3-5 and on the verge of being out of the tournament, and I obviously didn't want that to happen. I told myself just to stay in there and do what I had been practicing and it'll come together sooner or later."

"I think the more pressure I get, the tougher I get."

For Petrova, the opposite was happening.

"Serena raised her game, and I started to be a little bit more careful on the court," Petrova said. "She started putting more pressure on me. She came up with some unbelievable returns. She really started hustling and running for every single ball."

Williams broke, starting a string of six straight games that put her in control. Unlike Petrova, she never let up.

"She had so much experience," Petrova said. "She won many tournaments, many matches, she's been through difficult situations. So that definitely gave her a good feeling for today."

Some have questioned Williams' fitness. There were no questions after outlasting Petrova.

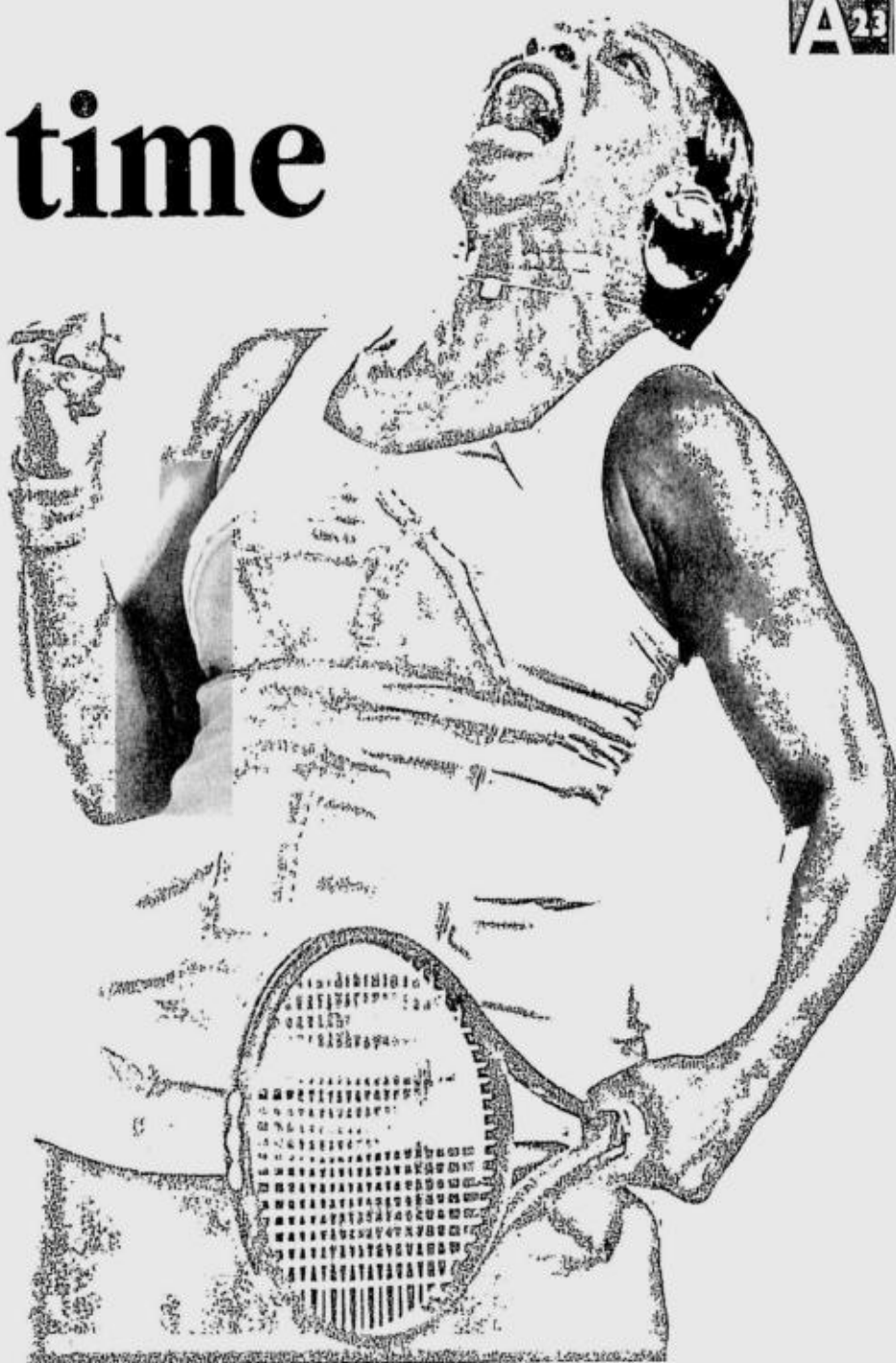
"I wasn't tired at all. I'm still not tired. I feel like going to run a marathon," Williams said, laughing.

Williams will face No. 11 Jelena Jankovic—a 6-3, 6-4 winner over Victoria Azarenka—on Sunday.

Federer, bidding for a 10th major, extended his streak to 32 matches—and 10 straight at Melbourne Park.

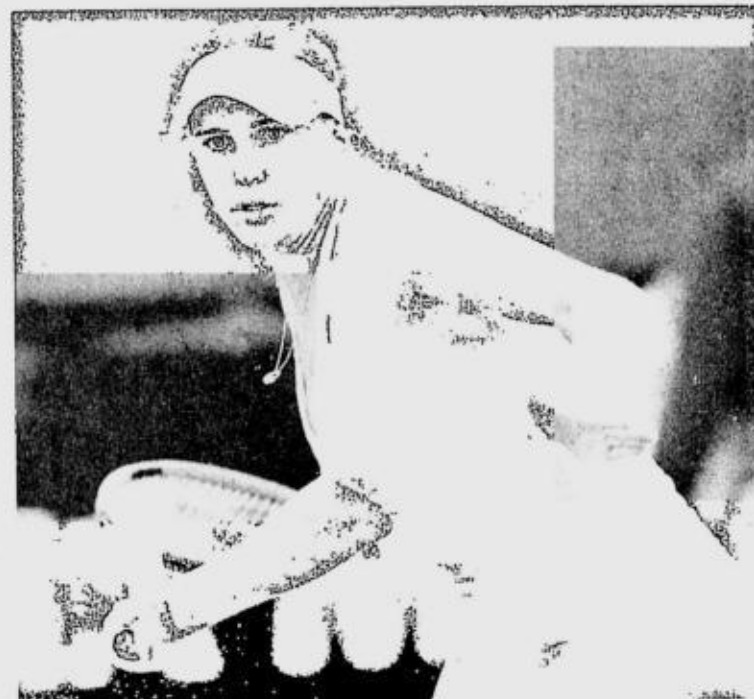
"I was happy the way I was playing today," Federer said. "I thought as well it was entertaining."

Certainly the near-capacity center-court crowd enjoyed the long rallies and pinpoint winners.



SERENA Williams (top) lets it all out after showing the world she's back in form by pulling the rug from under No. 5 seed Nadia Petrova. Rising star Nicole Pietrangeli of the Czech Republic, on the other hand, returns a serve to Slovakia's Katarina Srebotnik. Pietrangeli won in straight sets.

REUTERS, AP



ROGER Federer (top) and Rafael Nadal send their opponents packing.

AP

REUTERS

Halfway through new three-year schedule, Lakers' Jackson gets the thumbs-up



KOBE Bryant thinks his coach is doing a very good job.

DALLAS—WITH ALL THE ATTENTION paid to this week's games at San Antonio and Dallas, Lakers coach Phil Jackson could be forgiven for missing the significance of the milestone he will reach Saturday night in Oklahoma City.

The Lakers will play their 41st game of the season against the New Orleans Hornets, and Jackson will be halfway through the three-year job of restoring the Lakers to prominence, for which he was enlisted in June 2005.

By almost any measure, Jackson has succeeded beyond expectations. The Lakers returned to the playoffs last season, pushed the Phoenix Suns to seven games in their first-round series and are on pace to win 50-plus games this season.

They rank first in the league in road attendance—a fact Jackson often cites—and came into Thursday with the NBA's fourth-best record. Yet Jackson said his first consideration in evaluating his coaching future still is his recovery from hip-replacement surgery.

"It is a significant time," Jackson said, "because I'm kind of measuring how it's going, what the next step is in the process of staying on top of my physical ability to push through a season. So far, I've really enjoyed this year. I'm still dubious about the physical ability. After this big road trip, I'll know more."

Jackson stressed when he returned to the Lakers that he didn't expect to win a championship during his three years as coach. He was asked if he felt any closer to that ultimate goal with the Lakers seemingly ahead of schedule.

"Well, granted that we have a couple guys that are injured that can really contribute to our team this year," Jackson said. "We're still, I think, a player away from considering ourselves at the top of the league."

Owner Jerry Buss said in October that Jackson could remain as coach as long as he likes. Jackson said he is still continuing to operate on his original three-year timetable. The coach also got a vote of confidence Thursday

from his biggest star.

"I think he's doing his best coaching job," Kobe Bryant said. "I thought last year was the best coaching job of his career and this year he's topped that. He's not getting enough consideration—or any consideration, really—for coach of the year, which he should be."

"You look at all the injuries that we've had, the youth that we have and the record that we have. It pretty much speaks for itself."

Meanwhile, Jackson was waiting to speak to Kwame Brown to decide whether the center will face disciplinary action in connection with an incident Saturday morning in which a man alleged that Brown took a birthday cake from him and threw it at him.

"I think it was poor choices, and there's something there to be said, but I want to talk to him first before I really speak on the issue," Jackson said. "It's obviously one of the aspects of being on a team, is bringing attention to your club for your own behavior."

New York Times News Service

Foreign training for RP fencers approved

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES fencing champions will be sent to train abroad for the Beijing Olympics.

The names of SEA Games gold medalists Walbert Mendoza, Gian Carlo Nocom, Emerson Segui, Ramil Endriano and Vinna Nuestro have been submitted to the Olympic training program of an elite batch of athletes who will be funded by the First Gentleman Foundation.

Philippine Fencing Federation president Celso Dayrit yesterday confirmed the inclusion of the crack team which will be based in Europe the entire time until the Beijing Olympics.

Pencilled in their calendar is the Fleuret de St. Petersburg in Russia, one of the key international events where the local fencers could earn points to make it to the 2008 Beijing Games.

The Filipino fencers needed to take part in at least six foreign tournaments to get a chance to compete in Beijing, according to the PFF.

There are several other international tournaments up ahead, according to national coach Marilee Estampador, but they are still undecided where to field an entry.

She added that, if the fencers fail to earn points from the Tour, they will have to snag a slot in the Olympic qualifying for Asia-Oceania, slated next year at a still undisclosed venue.

Mendoza and Nocom will be competing in saber, while Segui and Endriano will battle in foil. Nuestro will be fielded in women's foil.

But first, according to Estampador, the PFF will have to decide where to hold their base in Europe.

"It depends on which weapon we want to concentrate," she said. "In foil, the best place to train is Germany or Italy, while saber is best taught in Hungary and Russia."

The PFF, which briefly had a training camp in China last year for the Doha Asian Games, also plans to take in a Chinese coach who will accompany the team in their European base.

Shaq-less Miami Heat outlast injured Pacers

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE SCORED 33 points, including a game-saving layup with 4.3 seconds left, as the Miami Heat wasted most of a big lead before beating the short-handed Indiana Pacers, 104-101, on Thursday night.

Jason Williams added 20 points and eight assists for the Heat, who led 91-75 with 8:05 left before the Pacers—who had only 10 players in uniform—got within two by going on a 23-9 run.

But Wade hit a pair of free throws with 24.5 seconds left, then drove full-court for the winning score.

Danny Granger had a career-high 28 points on 9-of-15 shooting for Indiana, but came up short on a potential, game-tying 3-point try as the final buzzer sounded.

The Heat were playing without Shaquille O'Neal for the 32nd straight game while he continues his recovery

from knee surgery—he will not play in Philadelphia on Friday, either, but his return is expected soon.

Marquis Daniels had a season-high 23 points for the Pacers.

Mavericks 114, Lakers 95

At Dallas, Josh Howard scored 29 points and Dirk Nowitzki had 27 as Dallas avenged its only loss over the past six weeks with a victory over Los Angeles.

Dallas has won 19 of 20 games, six in a row since a 101-98 loss in Los Angeles on Jan. 7 that ended a 13-game winning streak.

After the Mavericks started 0-4 for the first time in team history, the defending Western Conference champions reached the midpoint of their regular season with the NBA's best record (33-8).

Jason Terry had a season-high 13 as-

sists, one early in the second quarter coming when he missed underneath, got his own rebound and swiped the ball in one motion to Nowitzki at the top of the key for a 3-pointer. That basket put the Mavs up 32-30, and they never trailed again.

Terry scored a basket on the next Dallas possession, after Greg Buckner's steal.

Kobe Bryant had 26 points for the Lakers, whose three-game winning streak included a 100-96 victory at San Antonio on Wednesday night. Even though Bryant scored 13 points in the third quarter, that's when Dallas took control.

Howard and Nowitzki led six players in double-figure scoring for Dallas, which got 14 from Devean George, 12 from Terry and 11 each from Jerry Stackhouse and Buckner. Howard had 11 rebounds, while Nowitzki and Erick Dampier (who was scoreless) grabbed 10 boards each.



NOWITZKI

REUTERS

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2007 WORLD SLASHER CUP

INVITATIONAL 8-COCK DERBY
JAN 16, 18 & '20 • ARANETA COLISEUM



R.P. ENTRIES

Nene Abello Dicky Lim Joel Fernandez Philip Chiongbian
Jorge "Nene" Araneta Edwin Bacud Jose Paragas
Pablo Hufano Jr. Boy Marzo Ito Ynares
Danding Cojuangco Richard Bates Manny Pacquiao
Rudy Salud Lito Orillaza Patrick Antonio Nestor Mercado
Esting Teopaco Paolo Malvar Biboy Enriquez
Jet Fernando Gerry Espino Pico Berin Frank Berin
Claude Bautista Boy De Roca Ronnie Puno Jesry Palmares
Conrad Estrella Iggy Arroyo Ricoy Palmares
Tony Oppen Rudy Jingco Madambayan Bros.
Cesar Tan Ompong Plaza Boyet Plaza JV Magsaysay
Tony Escoto William Go Gerry Escalona Patrick Puno
Jun Jingco Frankie Uy Peping Cojuangco Wilson Uy
Lawrence Wacnang James Uy Boboy Delos Santos
Joey Delos Santos Bobby Doromal Marcel Julao Jun Julao
Sonny Lagon Mauro Prieto Raffy Prieto Ampil Bros.
Eddie Araneta Ram Lopez Alan Tan Raymond Velayo
Josar Ramos Anthony Lim Honey Yu Jun Topacio
Paul Estrellado Rudy Albano Jun Mendoza Raffy Campos
Boy Gamilla Mimi Itchon Wilson Agbayani Jun Caluya
Peping Ricafort Boy Royo Jimmy Zapanta Tom Quiwa
Rene Moraga Eddie Boy Cheng Ting Ariosia
Armando Santos Tony Tan Raul Ebeo Edwin Abella
A.R. Sta. Maria Mike Ramulo Osang Dela Cruz
John Paul Montenegro Eric Ong Rey Briones
Anthony Garcia Noe Palmares Arnel Oseas
Manny Pinal June Arilla Mike Atayde Orlando Sazon
Ferdie Buensalida Jamar Hizon Rocafort
Ayong Lorenzo Marc Santiago Zaldy Sandoval
Loy Palmares Sam La Luma Jun Marasigan
(partial list)

U.S./ FOREIGN ENTRIES

Roger Roberts, GEORGIA Rey Alexander, ALABAMA
Mike Formosa, HAWAII Tom Cooper, NORTH CAROLINA
Jeff Hudspeth, NORTH CAROLINA Cris Nesmith, ALABAMA
Ferdie Patam, CALIFORNIA Domi Corpus, CALIFORNIA
Joe Stanfield, CALIFORNIA Speedy Gonzales, CALIFORNIA
Sedfrey Linsangan, GUAM Johnny Philips, GEORGIA
Joey Melendres, AUSTRALIA Roy Minoza, CANADA
Farley Minoza, CANADA Henry Fajardo, CALIFORNIA
Reggie Pena, CALIFORNIA Toti Morales, CALIFORNIA
Ed Alfafara, CALIFORNIA Ric Cabullas, CANADA
Bobby Fairchild, OKLAHOMA Noriaki Morita, JAPAN
Henry Navarro, CALIFORNIA Daryl Wilson, KENTUCKY
Jason Campbell, USA Zosimo Antivo, LAS VEGAS
Ric De Guzman, CALIFORNIA Rene Medina, CALIFORNIA
Rodel Castales, SAN FRANCISCO Vic Diez, GUAM
Jessie Sevilla, FLORIDA Eduardo Vega, FLORIDA
Mike Linear, FLORIDA Bob Linear, FLORIDA
Jim Jones, KENTUCKY Benny Costes, ILLINOIS
Ben Santa Teresa, KENTUCKY Tony Ang, TAIWAN
Edwin Penamante, ILLINOIS Ramil Robles, CALIFORNIA
Richard McCormick, CANADA Edwin Tagle, CALIFORNIA
Baby Evangelista, CALIFORNIA
Thomas Miskosh, GERMANY
Herman Castellejos, HAWAII
(partial list)

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HOST: PINTAKASI OF CHAMPIONS

Alcano, Orcollo plunge into action in Osaka

REIGNING WORLD POOL CHAMPION RONNIE Alcano and World Pool League king Dennis Orcollo open their respective bids today in the 17th All Kansai 9-Ball Open at the Mag Suminoe Billiards Hall in Osaka, Japan.

It will be the first major tournament this year for Alcano, who bested German ace Ralf Souquet in the WPC finals in Manila last November.

The lanky, 34-year-old cue artist from Calamba City failed to progress from the quarterfinal round of last month's Power-In Super Cuper Cup in Taiwan.

Orcollo, the 27-year-old from Quezon City, hopes to sustain his winning form following his victory in the 10-ball Ring Game event of the recent Derby City Classic in Louisville in Kentucky.

"I hope to play smarter in Osaka," Orcollo said.

The Filipinos are eyeing a repeat of their 2005 campaign in the tournament. That year, Warren Kiamco towed a mesmerizing 1-2-3-4 Filipino finish. Orcollo, Ramil Gallego and Antonio Lining finished in that order behind Kiamco.

Aside from Alcano, Orcollo, Gallego and Lining, the other Filipinos seeing action are Carlo Biado, Dondon Razalan, Roel Esquillo and Rudy Morta.

Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Lee Van Cortezza begged off at the last minute, according to Rolly Vicente, longtime friend and manager of



ALCANO



ORCOLLO

both Reyes and Bustamante.

Reyes is playing exhibition matches in Singapore while Bustamante is spending time with his family in Manila.

"We are confident that our players will continue their dominance in the All Kansai Open," said Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo.

Defending champion Masaaki Tanaka and 15th Asian Games 8-ball gold medalist Satoshi Kawabata lead the Japanese challenge.

Osaka is the hometown of Kawabata, who came from behind to foil Antonio Gabica, 9-7, in the 8-ball gold-medal match in Doha, Qatar.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

NCA Cocker of the Year race begins

THE RACE FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL Cockers' Association (NCA) Cocker of the Year title kicks off with a series of derbies starting this month.

Touching off the race is the NCA 5-cock derby to be hosted by Patrick Antonio and Rey Briones this Jan. 23 at the Pasay City cockpit.

Another 5-cock derby on Jan. 25 at the Pasay City cockpit will be hosted by coffee magnate Ric De Guzman and Rene Medina.

The marquee names in Philippine cockfighting are set to battle it out for the much-coveted NCA win in the derbies backed by Sagupaan Complexor.

Boxing hero World Fighter of the Year Manny Pacquiao is among several favorites to win the NCA crown.

Part of the proceeds of the NCA derbies will go to the organization's civic and charitable causes, notably college scholarships in veterinary and poultry science for underprivileged students.



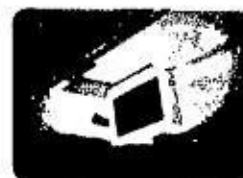
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BUSINESS

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RP on map of Asia's top investment sites



WITH STRINGS ATTACHED
Cebu guitar factory owner Fernando Alegre tests one of his own products fresh off the factory. The Alegre Guitar company in Abono, Pajak, Lapu-Lapu City, is but one of many fine firms that have made Cebu famous for its instrumental craftsmanship.

EDWIN BACASHAS

Dutch firm expects Phisix to hit historic highs in '07

By Doris C. Dumlaog

DUTCH FINANCIAL GIANT ING HAS PICKED THE Philippines as one of the top three investment sites in the Asia-Pacific region this year.

Hong Kong-based ING Investment Management regional head of equity Nicholas Toovey yesterday endorsed the Philippines to investors for the second straight year, explaining that equities would likely outperform bonds in the world's fastest growing region this year.

For 2006, Toovey's top three market picks include Hong Kong and Malaysia. Last year, the top three were the Philippines, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

ING Investment's chief investment officer in the Philippines Paul Joseph Garcia said that, based on ING's 12-month view, corporate profits would surge by about 20 percent this year, lifting the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index.

He said the Phisix—now trading at its best level in 10 years—could hit historic highs, even reaching 3,500 to 3,700, by

the fourth quarter of this year.

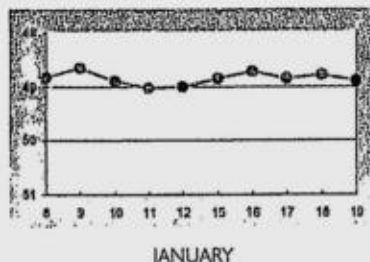
The Phisix peaked near the 3,400 level just before the Asian crisis 10 years ago.

"Macroeconomic fundamentals are supportive of higher corporate earnings this year, based on expansion of net margins, especially with interest rates at historical low," according to Garcia, who expects the country's gross domestic economy this year to grow by over 5.5 percent, while inflation eases further.

He said this favorable interest rate regime—due to the government's success in applying fiscal measures—would benefit debt-ridden corporations. The electoral exercise in May is also expected to boost revenue, with about 5,000 candidates spending for their respective campaigns, apart from the government's own pump-priming activities.

RP ON MAP/B3

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 48.895 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 19, 2007

GOLD: \$632.70-633.20

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 19, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.10 percent higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.10 percent higher, with some support coming from gains in index-heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT), dealers said.

The market was largely in a correction mode, marked by broad-based profit taking, but active interest in PLDT sent the index to its highest level in almost a decade, they said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 3.45 points to 3,085.18 after trading between 3,063.45 and 3,090.94.

The broader all-share index fell 7.55 points to 1,920.99.

Losers led gainers 75 to 38, with 56 stocks unchanged.

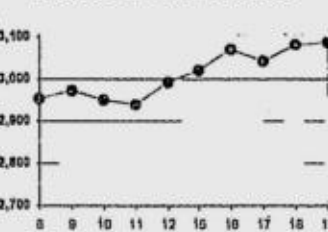
Volume was 3.8 billion shares worth P5.7 billion (\$116 million).

Top-traded PLDT jumped P60 to P2,550.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. was up one peso at P58.50 while Ayala Land Inc. advanced 25 centavos to P16.

AFP

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Transco auction put off due to legal issues

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED to further delay the auction of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), saying there were still legal and commercial matters that bidders need to settle before a sale could push through.

Authorities announced that the bidding will be rescheduled on Feb. 5, instead of the earlier agreed bidding date of Jan. 22.

The government had postponed the auction twice in the recent past. The original bidding was supposed to take place on Sept. 27. But this date was moved to Nov. 7, and then to Dec. 20.

"All the three bidders have been informed and consulted, and they have agreed to the change in schedule," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said yesterday in a press conference organized by members of the foreign press. "The decision to reschedule was made to give PSALM management and prospective bidders additional time to thresh out legal and commercial issues."

PSALM (Power Sector Assets

and Liabilities Management Corp.), which Teves chairs, is the government entity that will carry out the sale of the country's power assets.

The three parties that are expected to participate in the bidding are: The consortium of Tiratna Holdings Corp., Tenaga Nasional Bhd. and Newbridge Asia IV L.P.; the group of Citadel Holdings Inc. and Terna SPAMI; and the group of Monte Oro Grid Resource Corp. and State Grid Corporation of China.

Tiratna Holdings Corp. is a firm headed by Henry Sy Jr., San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, and Joselito Campos of United Laboratories Inc.

The groups have all passed the financial and technical requirements to participate in the bidding for Transco.

The winning bidder will be given a 25-year contract to operate the country's power grid.

The assets of Transco has been valued at P138 billion. Estimates also said \$850 million is needed over the next five years to allow for upgrades and expansion.

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1. For every purchase of the participating Epson Multimedia Projector in any authorized dealer within the promo period, end-users are entitled to a free (1 unit) JBL Creature II 2.1 Speaker System.

2. End-user must present a valid proof of purchase (must be a Sales Invoice or Official Receipt) and a valid Identification Card (must be Company ID, SSS, Driver's License, TIN, Passport) upon claiming of the free item. Authorization letter is needed if purchase is made by a company.

3. End-user can claim the free unit at the following Epson offices:

- MANILA
a. Epson Showroom, 4/F Bldg. B, SM Megamall
b. Epson Showroom, G/F Cyberzone Area, SM North Edsa
c. Epson Phils. Corp. 38/F Rufino Pacific Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City
CEBU
d. Door 1, Jo. A Bldg., North Road 6 Reclamation, Cebu City
Davao
e. 2/F, Door 1, Abasolo Bldg., Legaspi St., Davao City

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EMP-TWD3	EMP-1715
EMP-TW700	EMP-62
EMP-1700	EMP-82

4. For other territories, send a copy of the Sales Invoice/Official Receipt, valid ID, a return address and authorization letter (if purchase is made by a company) via mail to:
Epson Philippines Corporation
38/F Rufino Pacific Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Tel. No.: 813-6567
Attn: Sales & Marketing - Business Product Group
5. Once documents are received, free item will be delivered via courier service. Only completed documents will be entertained.
6. Promo period is from Jan. 20, 2007 up to Mar. 30, 2007.
7. Redemption period shall be 60 days from end of promo period.
8. All unclaimed item after the redemption period will be forfeited in favor of Epson Philippines Corporation.

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First Pacific gets surprise reprieve

HK conglomerate buys precious time to tighten hold on PLDT

By Daxim L. Lucas
and Riza T. Olchondra

THE GOVERNMENT GAVE FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. a surprise reprieve for its P25.2-billion bid to tighten its grip on the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), announcing that it actually had until Feb. 1—not Jan. 19 as previously announced—to pay for the controversial stake.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves yesterday explained that a delay in notifying a unit of First Pacific about its right of first refusal meant that the firm is also entitled to a separate 30-day period.

This means that the Hong Kong-based conglomerate of Indonesia's Salim family has almost two more weeks to pay the government for its 14-percent stake in the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), which represents an indirect 6.4-percent stake in PLDT.

First Pacific's stake in the country's largest telecommunications firm is held by two holding firms: Metro Pacific Asset and Larouge BV.

The finance chief revealed that the Jan. 19 deadline was applicable only to Metro Pacific, which received its notice on Dec. 20, 2006. Larouge, he said, received its notice on Jan. 2, 2007—a fact previously unknown to the public.

"Feb. 1 is the deadline for the right of first refusal of Larouge," Teves told reporters. "They are based in Hong Kong, and they only received the notice by mail on Jan. 2, I think."

On Dec. 15, it was announced that First Pacific and NTT DoCoMo Inc. would together match the P25.2-billion bid of private equity group Parallax Fund XXVII for the government's stake in PLDT.

But Teves said that First Pacific would likely bid for the PTIC shares on its own, rather than in

tandem with Japan's NTT DoCoMo as previously announced.

"From what I gathered, First Pacific will do it alone," he said, amid rumors that the Japanese telecommunications giant—an existing minority shareholder in PLDT—has withdrawn from the deal.

However, First Pacific spokesperson Sara Cheung yesterday said that "discussions with NTT DoCoMo are still ongoing, and we will make a disclosure in due time."

She held off speculation that NTT DoCoMo has abandoned the project due to controversies that erupted when the government offered up the PLDT stake, which the Supreme Court forfeited in favor of the government as part of the "ill-gotten wealth" of former President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan had previously said that First Pacific, in which he is also managing director, would be

willing to pay for the PTIC shares on its own if NTT DoCoMo were to back out.

"We hope to close the transaction as soon as practicable," he said.

The deal has been criticized by opposition lawmakers for being underpriced, with the shares being sold at a discount to PLDT's price on the stock market.

"The highest bid received by the government during the auction process was equivalent to about P2,100 (\$42.52) per share of PLDT held by PTIC. In December, the closing price of a PLDT share on the Philippine Stock Exchange was P2,440 (\$49.40)."

Once the proposed acquisition is completed, First Pacific will have an attributable economic interest of approximately 27.5 percent of PLDT's common share capital.

First Pacific currently holds about 24.3 percent of the issued common share capital of PLDT.

SB Corp. released P3.82B in loans in '06

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STATE AGENCY SMALL BUSINESS Guarantee and Financing Corp. yesterday reported it released a total of P3.82 billion in loans to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in 2006, up 17.6 percent from P3.25 billion a year earlier due to a more extensive network of lending channels.

SB Corp., a part of the Department of Trade and Industry, is mandated under Republic Act No. 6977 or the Magna Carta for Small Enterprises to be the credit champion of SMEs.

SB Corp.'s wholesale lending program remained the most successful, accounting for some 68 percent or P2.6 billion of its total fund releases.

On the other hand, the firm's retail lending program represented P572 million in loans, while P312 million in MSME funding was extended through microfinance.

SB Corp.'s least availed-of credit product, called credit guarantee program, represented P252 million in lending.

Trade Undersecretary Zoraida Amelia Alonzo said transactions under the lender's microfinance program "vastly exceeded our expectations" with a 160-percent growth rate.

"Also, our retail lending program grew by around 30 percent, this year," Alonzo said. "We have taken steps to correct the weaknesses of our credit guarantee program and we are currently redesigning it to make it more attractive to our clients."

In 2005, SB Corp. released P2.46 billion through wholesale lending; P440 million through retail lending; P123 million through microfinancing and P229 million through credit guarantees.

In bustling Cebu, an P800-M mall expansion takes place

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—CEBU HOLDINGS Inc. (CHI) is set to complete the P800-million expansion of its shopping mall Ayala Center Cebu in anticipation of a further growth in Cebu's retail market, CHI president and chief executive officer Francis Monera said.

Monera said the company's retail business has been doing well and was expected to grow even further this year.

"We're bullish about Cebu," he said during a press briefing.

The Cebu Holdings is an affiliate of Manila-based real estate leader, Ayala Land Inc.

CHI closed 2006 with a P207-million net income, up from the previous year's P117 million, Monera said.

CHI's revenues, on the other hand, reached P1.04 billion, 51 percent more than the P690 million recorded in 2005, Monera said.

Monera said that recurring revenues, which come from the company's retail and office leasing operations, accounted for 48 percent of sales last year.

The rest of the revenues came from the sale of residential and commercial lots, condominium units and sports club shares.

According to Monera, CHI intends to sustain its market leadership in the retail front through its mall projects.

He said these included the expansion of the main mall and the redevelopment of the lagoon area.

The expansion of the main mall started in June 2006 and would be completed by April, Monera said.

The lagoon redevelopment, on the other hand, would be completed by the end of the year, he added.

The mall's expansion building and lagoon redevelopment would add 6,000 square meters and 8,000 square meters of leasable space, respectively.

Monera said CHI would convert the lagoon area into a development similar to Greenbelt in Makati but with Cebuano characteristics.

"It would enhance the tourism positioning of Cebu," he said.

The building would have popular restaurants with al fresco dining areas on the first level; and trendy shops and lifestyle outlets and bars and entertainment clubs to make Cebu's nightlife more attractive.

The lagoon area building would be connected to the main mall through covered walkways and outdoor escalators, while an outdoor stage would become a venue for shows.

Monera said the company would be constructing a multi-level parking building to provide more parking spaces.

This would be completed in time for the completion of the two ongoing projects, he said.

The Cebu Holdings would also focus on maintaining its market leadership in the residential market through its high-end Amara project, Monera said.

The company is developing the Amara, a 46-hectare subdivision located in Barangay Catarman, Liloan, with Coastal Highpoint Ventures Inc.

Amara, promoted as the only lighthouse community in the country, has been considered as a real estate bestseller since it first entered the market last year, according to the CHI.

The project is located just beside the 72-feet Bagacay Point Lighthouse, which was built in 1904 on orders of first Philippine Governor-General William Howard Taft.

Appreciating peso leads PLDT, Piltel to trim rates

By Riza T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE Telephone Company (PLDT) and Pilipino Telephone Corporation (Piltel) have cut service charges for landline subscribers due to foreign currency adjustments.

PLDT told the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) that its average foreign exchange rate has dropped by 5 percent as of Jan. 2007.

PLDT said it will cut its local service rates accordingly by 5 percent.

The telco last adjusted its charges in November last year, when the foreign exchange rate was P49.90 to the dollar, down 4 percent from the Oct. 2 rate that year of P50.30 to the dollar.

Piltel said in a separate filing with the NTC that it would cut its forex rate by 10 percent.

Piltel is authorized to adjust its service rates in Sulu, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Tawi-tawi, Misamis Occidental, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato and Sarangani province by 1 percent for every 10-centavo fluctuation in the exchange rate of the Philippine peso to the US dollar.

In another filing with the NTC, Innove, third ranked in terms of market share, said it was also poised to adjust its currency adjustment rates.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 19, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	25,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46	46	45.5	46	3,022,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68.5	68.5	67	68	878,900
China Banking Corp.	690	690	690	690	980
Citibank Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	450,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	82	82.5	82	82.5	104,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	47.5	48.5	47.5	48	5,842,900
Philippine National Bank	48.5	49	48.5	48.5	18,000
Phil. Savings Bank	30.5	32.5	30.5	32	930,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	69	69.5	68	69.5	229,300
Security Bank Corp.	54	54	53	55	41,100
Union Bank of the Phil.					
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	400,000
Citiseconline Com. Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.9	185,000
First Abacus Financial	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	1,000,000
Philpino Fund Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	2,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	10,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	18,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	305	310	302.5	305	13,620
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2020	2020	2020	2020	490
Investment Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	1,002,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.1	5.1	34,099,000
First Gen Corp.	57.5	57.5	55.5	55.5	1,410,400
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	74	74	71	71.5	583,200
Manila Electric Co. A	64	64	63	63.5	409,600
Manila Electric Co. B	66	66	64	65	2,720,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.2	9.3	3,790,000
Petrone Corp.	4.15	4.15	4.1	4.1	4,713,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	180,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	2,026,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	36,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	9,500
Golden Fields Corp.	43	43.5	43	43.5	499,000
RFM Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.28	607,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.85	338,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	250,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63.5	63.5	103,200
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74.5	74.5	421,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.12	2.12	1,773,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19	18.75	18.75	1,306,100
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.28	1.28	1.22	1.22	23,091,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.05	4.2	4.05	4.1	435,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	308,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.3	624,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemex Technologies Inc.	5.1	5.2	5	5.1	3,525,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	310,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.74	0.76	0.73	0.74	11,150,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.215	0.22	12,460,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	58,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	15,000,000
Alok-Big Wedge. Inc. B	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	1,000
Ayala Corp.	9.2	9.5	8.95	9.2	191,670
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	150,000
Aboliz Equity Ventures	9	9.1	8.9	9.1	1,465,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	12,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.07	0.075	257,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.05	3.05	3	3	105,000
APC Group Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	1,380,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	372,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	1,003,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	5,400,000
Babac Resources & Hldgs	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	14,000
Bacnotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	50,000
Bengres Holdings Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.55	2.55	43,481,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	877,000
Filmvest Dev. Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.4	4.45	1,000,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	640,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.3	2.44	2.3	2.42	691,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	958,500
Medco Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,000,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	4.95	417,000
Mullex Inv. Corp.	2.06	2.1	2.02	2.06	6,268,000
Pacific	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	12,100,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.72	0.72	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.165	6,600,000
Sinopharm Corp.	0.345	0.345	0.335	0.335	268,500
SM Investments Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.06	300,000
South China Resources Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.7	523,000
Seafont Resources Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	7,200,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.15	0.155	0.145	0.145	5,430,000
Velux Industries Inc.					
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.25	16	16	15,775,400
Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	3,277,000
A Brown Company Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.35	3.35	216,000
Crown Equities Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	353,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	100,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	390,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	330,000
Everest Bay Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	32,770,000
ETB Realty Developers Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.64	0.64	30,700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.075	73,778,000
Edsa Prop. Hldgs. Inc.	1.64	1.66	1.58	1.62	3,840,000
Ever-Goleco Resources	0.17	0.185	0.17	0.185	520,000
Finvest Land Inc.	0.175	0.2	0.175	0.185	35,000,000
Goleco Land Inc.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	1,000,000
Goleco Land Inc. B	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.4	80,000
Interpore Res.	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.51	3,440,000
Interpore Res. B	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.8	1,250,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,000,000
Est-estate Land Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	700,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	2.36	2.36	2.3	2.34	46,481,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	153,000
Megawatt Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	170,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	2.18	2.18	2	2	220,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	15.5	15.5	15.25	15.25	3,907,600
Polar Property Holdings	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.69	5,660,000
Riceland Land Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	485,000
Phil. Realty and Holdings	11.75	11.75	11.25	11.25	6,780,000
SM Development Corp.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.11	4,740,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.					
Unwired Holdings Inc.					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	200
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	40,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1275	1280	1270	1275	25,610
Globe Telecom Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	5,403,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co	2500	2570	2500	2550	134,880
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	56,900,000
Ignics Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	1,318,000
IPVG Corp.	4	4.15	3.95	3.95	75,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	9,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	9,200,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.46	2.46	2.4	2.42	128,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.034	236,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	10,000
Aboliz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.28	1.82	1.8	1.82	182,000
Int'l Container Term. Sv	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	63,600
Lorent Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	60,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.12	2.14	2.08	2.1	1,493,000
Manila Jockey Club	0.59	0.61	0.59	0.6	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.					2,930,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	820	820	820	820	51,000
iPeople Inc.	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.2	
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.1	382,000
Physis Inc.	20.5	22	20	21.5	1,385,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	15,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5	4.7	4.8	749,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	9.1	9.1	8.9	9.1	494,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	121,000
Atlas Cons. 'Min & Dev'	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.2	2,438,000
Benguet Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.55	2.85	12,000
Buron Copper Silver Mines	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	7,080,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	4,010,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	1,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	2.31	2.31	2.29	2.3	634,800
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	178,800
Omico Corp.	3.6	3.65	3.5	3.55	7,716,000
Philux Mining Corp.	15.75	15.75	15.25	15.5	242,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.72	0.76	0.69	0.69	760,000
United Pampanga Mining Co.	1.58	1.6	1.52	1.58	10,119,000
Indust Ind't					
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	2,080,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	36,500
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	7,000
The Petrodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.05	1.06	17,005,000
The Petrodrill Corp. B	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	184,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	549,000

Gov't seized P1.3B in counterfeit goods in 2006

Total haul from '05 has reached P2.4B, IPO says

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON Intellectual Property Rights (NCIPR) yesterday reported that the active participation of firms and business groups in the campaign to uphold IPR helped haul in P1.3 billion worth of counterfeit goods in 2006.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., director general of the Intellectual Property Office, which leads the NCIPR, said concerted efforts among various agencies and private sector groups brought the total haul to P2.4 billion since the committee was created in 2005.

"The numbers represent the hard work of all the agencies (as well as) the contributions of the IP owners' associations, business chambers, and industry associations in the advocacy," Cristobal said. "(These are also results of efforts in) education and monitoring work."

He said that while the number of

enforcement operations or raids was halved to 1,453 cases, the value of goods seized actually went up because the concerned agencies went after "big ticket IP violators."

Cristobal said Bureau of Customs operations accounted for 59 percent or P722 million of the total estimated value of seized goods in 2006 through 26 warrants of seizure and detentions.

Counterfeit branded shoes and clothes were among the seized goods, by the BOC.

BoC's IP unit initiated more stringent border controls with its Automated Customs Operational System and established a risk assessment program and management system for data gathering.

Also, the National Bureau of Investigation turned in P291 million worth of seized goods from 419 operations; the Optical Media Board confiscated items valued at P172 million from 706 inspections and 87 searches; and the Philippine National Police seized

P131 million worth of fake goods from 259 operations.

"Through close coordination among NCIPR agencies, which also include the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the National Telecommunications Commission, a total of 60 convictions were handed down since 2001, 14 of which took place in 2006," Cristobal said.

Earlier this year, the NCIPR announced it had adopted a "no settlement policy" regarding IPR violations in a move to strengthen the drive against counterfeiting.

Cristobal had said it was no longer allowing out-of-court settlement between parties in cases that were being investigated to give more teeth to enforcement and prosecution efforts.

The "no settlement" policy is expected to discourage cases of piracy as well as dispel allegations that the government's prosecution of IP cases are weak and slow.

Corporate way to peace

ALL OVER THE WORLD, THERE IS A GROWING confidence that business, big or small, is not motivated by profit alone. It certainly must have a social conscience.

To achieve a sustainable peace and security in any post-conflict area, economic development must be present. Investment opportunities must be available to rebuild broken dreams and broken lives.

In Mindanao, there are many such cases of broken lives, referred to as casualties of war. But now that the war has long been over, where do we go from here?

After the signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996, a government corporate entity was established to undertake business in areas unattractive to the private sector.

The government should not go into business and should never compete with the private sector, but in the periphery of developed and progressing areas, specifically post-conflict locales, the government must directly engage in viable agricultural mass production ventures.

The Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) was created through Presidential Decree No. 690 during the Marcos administration to engage in various development projects in conflict-affected areas. Idled for four years, SPDA was reactivated through EO 560, signed on Aug. 29, 2006 by President Macapagal-Arroyo, to pursue development efforts under the government's catch-up plan for the full implementation of the 1996 peace agreement.

Investments

The stable peace and order condition brought about by progress in the peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GRP-MILF) is gradually transforming the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao into an investment destination. Cited as the poorest region in the country and a known site of the decades-old Moro rebellion, ARMM is now attracting investors from the United States, Japan and China. Investments in ARMM for the first three months of last year grew by 10 percent to P146 million from year-ago's P131.4 million.

Also, two multimillion-peso investments will be poured into the region this year, namely: the P200-million BIMP-Eaga (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asian Growth Area) poultry project in Maguindanao province and the P30-million banana plantation development in Lanao del Sur.

The BIMP-Eaga poultry project will be a convergence of investors from the four countries. A 20-hectare facility that will produce halal chicken will be set up within the Regional Economic Zone Authority (Reza) in Polloc, Maguindanao, to capture the vast Middle East halal markets, which was estimated at \$2 billion.

The banana project will develop 600 to 2,000 hectares of banana plantations in Wao and Bumbaran towns in Lanao del Sur through three big companies namely, La Frutera, Uni Frutti and Paglas Corp. The harvests are aimed for shipment to Iran, Japan and China.

These investment figures and development plans are promising, but there is more work to be done in other areas. In emphasizing the importance of establishing a corporate scheme, SPDA will focus on areas in Mindanao that lack economic mo-

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian



mentum. It will explore action agenda that will provide access to business to small entrepreneurs or investors.

Development plans

SPDA's thrust is to initiate projects in industries and areas where risks are too high for any business to come in, usually in conflict-affected areas. It aims to develop and implement sound livelihood projects. The intended project beneficiaries are former MNLF combatants, Muslims and non-Muslims.

The agency is reviewing 21 stalled corporate projects—ranging from small projects like fruit nursery, to big projects like feed mill operations and organic fertilizer processing in Davao City and Sultan Kudarat; prawn hatchery in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, and farms in various areas in Mindanao.

It has identified nine new major projects: rice production project in Kabunlan, Maguindanao; oil palm plantation in Butuan City, coconut production in Matanao, Davao del Sur; and the sea weeds processing plant in Sulu.

SPDA is into collaborative efforts with other line agencies. In a joint project with the Department of Agriculture, it is now developing a demo farm inside its complex in Catalunan Pequeno, Davao City.

The reactivation of the SPDA is a good sign that the national government is serious in addressing the complaints of various Muslim groups, and the development problems of Mindanao.

Its catch-up plans for the 1996, FPA involves current consultations with the MNLF to draw the appropriate plans for the group. The consultation is expected to run until the middle of next year. The agency will allot at least 20 percent of its budget for projects where business risk is too high and rate of return is perceived to be nil.

The agency has been receiving strong support from other stakeholders in the region. In fact, the Iranun Development Agenda (IDA), a project intended to develop Camp Abubakar into a coconut and fruit tree plantation, was personally endorsed to SPDA by former Governor Misuari.

The task of developing Muslim communities is gigantic. It's a huge job and a single entity would be incapable of delivering the entirety of developing Muslim communities. It is good that SPDA is here to provide a platform for engaging Muslims to adopt a corporate thinking.

As a corporate agency, SPDA will infuse capital and create a new mindset for Muslims—a corporate one. They need to learn the business of development rather than wait for development to come.

The path to peace and development is never easy, nor is it without investments, be it in the form of money, time and effort. In this path that SPDA is taking, corporate investment represents a region's future, and can actually have immediate ripple effects that will bolster economic stability in the ailing parts of Mindanao.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao and chair of Mindanaworld Foundation. E-mail comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)



FRUITFUL ENTERPRISE

A woman sits still, minding her own fruit business along the service lane of Aguinaldo Highway in Tagaytay City. Countless fruit and delicacy stalls have been springing up along that stretch of the highway, drawing visitors to their varicolored fruits on display.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Transco auction ...

From page B1

The government has been trying to sell Transco since 2003, largely as a means to develop the country's power sector, and partly to generate much-needed revenue. The government has adopted the policy of disposing assets that it deems better run by the private sector.

Private sector investments are needed in the power sector to ensure stability of electricity supply over the long term.

Selling Transco, however, has been a tough task for the government due to prospective investors' doubts on the profitability of the power business in the country. Authorities, however, said the new tariff system that took effect in June would make investing in the power sector more prudent.

RP on map of Asia's ...

From page B1

Garcia estimated that about P5 to P10 billion would be infused into the domestic economy this year by private sector's election spending, on top of the government's infrastructure spending exceeding 3 to 4 percent of gross domestic output this year.

"There will be some catching up that's going to be very supportive of infrastructure-related stocks," Garcia said. "We're also more bullish on cyclical stocks. We favor banks and property issues."

In the years ahead, he said, the property market in the country will likely be more buoyant, while banks are seen to be more aggressive in lending to small and medium enterprises, as well as mid-sized corporations.

Garcia said Toovey's picks for this year was a "good call."

In explaining why Hong Kong was again a favored investment site this year, Toovey said that "there are a lot of Chinese stocks listed in Hong Kong, and they have a lot of momentum at the moment."

"(The stocks) are actually becoming quite expensive, but investors don't seem to be worried about that," Toovey added that there are a lot of new corporate issues and a sharp expansion in corporate activity in Hong Kong.

Malaysia was also chosen as top investment site this year because of a huge market upside.

"The cheapest market is Thailand, purely based on value ... that's where we would usually place bets," Toovey said. "But as you know, there are a lot of complications there right now."

The Thai central bank recently introduced fresh capital controls to curb the Thai baht's sharp appreciation.

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawag

You are what your mother ate, docs say

By Tessa R. Salazar

CAN ONE ACTUALLY PREVENT chronic cardiovascular diseases as early as when he or she is still in the womb? Can the risks of hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, coronary artery diseases and high cholesterol be prevented even before the patient is born?

Dr. Corazon Yabes Almirante, congress president of the International Congress Fetus as a Patient International Society, cited studies linking malnourished mothers to undernourished fetuses and the eventual diseases of these babies in their adult lives.

Barker's hypothesis

Almirante cited UK-based medical scientist David Barker's hypothesis during a Philippine College of Physicians forum on Tuesday.

Barker's hypothesis in 1990 indicates that intrauterine malnutrition, which results in low birth weight, thinness and short body length at birth, is associated with increased risk of coronary artery disease, hypertension (stroke), and type 2 (insulin resistant) diabetes mellitus in adult life. The diseases originate from adaptation which the fetus makes when it is undernourished—a process referred to as "in utero

programming" of the fetus.

Barker will be one of the 40 speakers from March 15 to 17 at the International Congress of the Fetus as a Patient Society's event at Edsa Shangri-La Manila dubbed "Ills from the womb: defusing a ticking time bomb." Other experts will be coming from the United States, Qatar, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Finland, Croatia, Australia, Sweden, Germany, Montenegro, Israel, the Netherlands, Indonesia and Argentina.

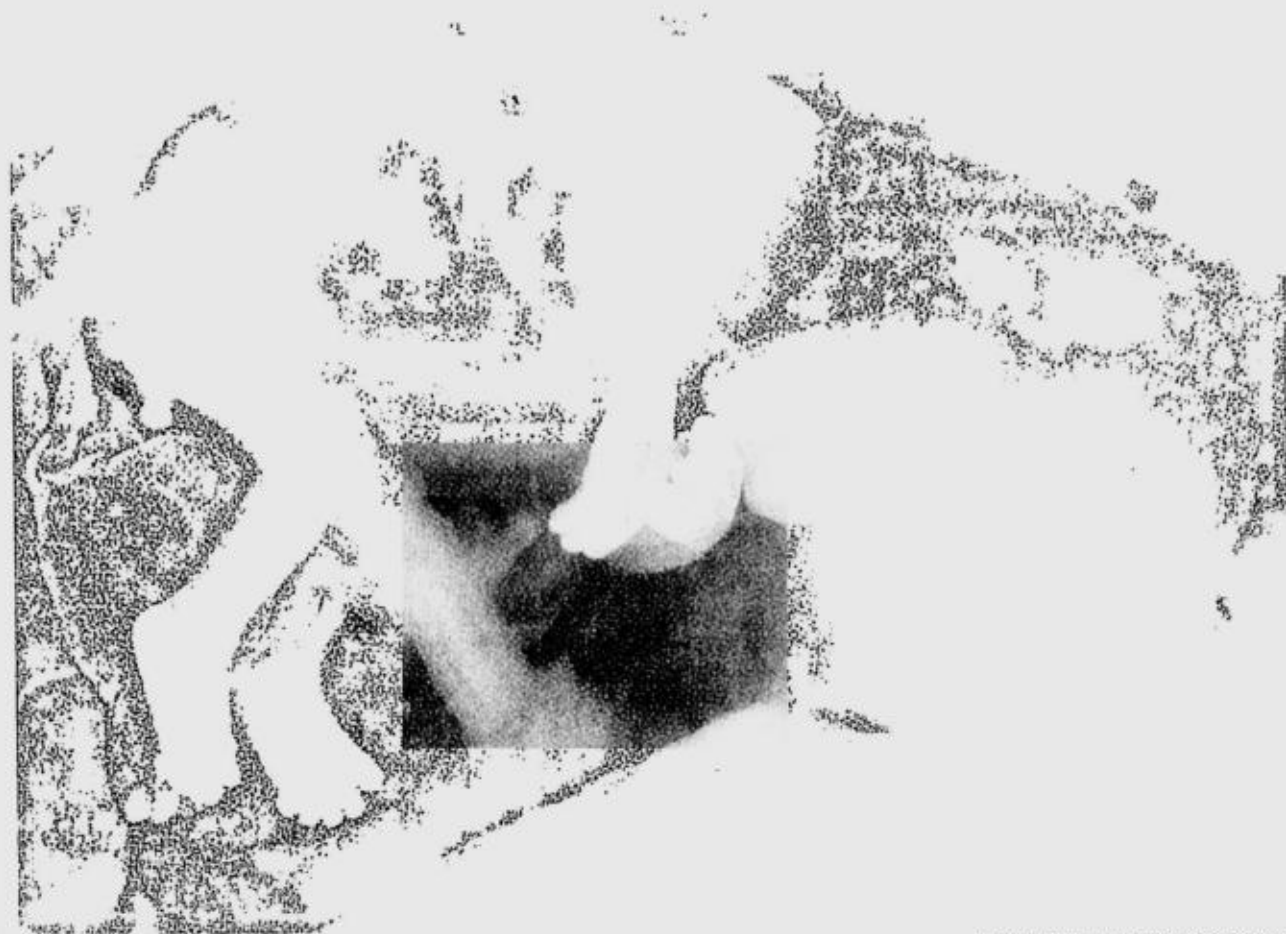
The congress will study the effects of maternal and fetal malnutrition, present strategies on how to optimize intrauterine fetal conditions, determine the optimum timing of delivery and its impact on the offspring and contribute to the reduction of type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension and coronary artery disease in adults by antenatal prevention.

'Reprogram'

Almirante said that if a baby doesn't get sufficient nutrients, the cells of the baby would not develop well.

She said the first reaction of the fetus that's deprived of nutrients is to "reprogram" itself so that it will adjust to the deprivation. She added that the stem cell count of fetuses deprived of nutrients becomes less.

Almirante added that parents' tendency after seeing their baby's low birth weight is to overfeed them in an attempt to catch up to the right weight in haste. She warned, however, that the baby's cell count would be inadequate to take in



BY THE TENTH

week of pregnancy, the baby's head and limbs have formed and all the essential organs are present. At this stage the rate of growth is rapid, much more so than at any time in later life.

everything being fed to it, resulting to diabetes, cholesterolemia or hypertension.

Ongoing study

To be presented during the international congress is an ongoing study in Cebu by the United States' National Institute of Health that started in 1983 that monitored 3,000 pregnant women—from conception up to birth and growing-up years of the babies.

The study correlated the food eaten by the mother and the birth weight. Almirante said some low-birth weight male babies that were included in the study developed high blood pressure as early as the prepubescent years—or

9 years old to be exact. These "babies" being monitored are now 23 years old.

Almirante observed alarming articles in foreign journals that predicted type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension and coronary artery diseases to increase by 42 percent in developed countries and 170 percent in developing countries.

Pregnant women or those who plan for pregnancy can read the "Daily Food Guide for a Pregnant Woman" found in the Nutritional Guidelines for Filipinos Handbook developed by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-DOST, or they can call 837-2934, 837-3164, e-mail cvcb@fnri.dost.gov.ph, or log on to www.fnri.dost.gov.ph.

READER'S DIGEST MOTHER AND BABY BOOK

Brainy vegetarians

IN AN OLD "HAGAR THE HORRIBLE" comic strip, the Viking and his sidekick Lucky Eddie are ordering a meal. Lucky Eddie asks for fish, explaining to his friend that it's brain food and that he's been eating it all his life. Hagar stares at him wordlessly, and then tells the waiter he'd like a steak. A new study now suggests that eating vegetables might be brain food as well.

In last Dec. 15's issue of the British Medical Journal, Catherine Gale from the University of Southampton and her colleagues from the University of Edinburgh and City University in London reached an interesting conclusion: British children with high IQ test scores were more likely to be vegetarian by age 30.

Lower risk for heart disease

This is not to say that the British meat eaters have lower IQs, however. Of the study's four authors, only one is vegetarian. Two professors are lapsed vegetarians, and one researcher is a self-confessed omnivore. Only the latter admits to having taken an IQ test, however, and he chose not to share his score with the others.

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

Gale et al. conceived this project after reviewing similar studies from Denmark, Scotland and Sweden. Those researchers found that the children who scored higher on IQ tests were at lower risk for heart disease as adults. Other studies also found relationships between intelligence scores and increased problem-solving skills. Based on all this, Gale et al. theorized that children who have higher IQ test results might be more likely to assess health risks and make more health-conscious choices, such as, they said, opting for vegetarianism.

To prove this theory, Gale et al. relied on data collected from a 1970 study involving about 17,000 babies born in Britain during a single week in April. When these babies reached the age of 10, they were given a series of mental ability tests to assess their vocabulary and math skills.

In 2000, about 11,000 of these now 30-year adults were again tracked down. Though they didn't have to take any tests this time, they were asked about their parents' socio-economic status to compare with the data collected 20 years before. Each participant also talked about how he/she had done both financially and academically, and about personal habits, including diet and whether or not they were vegetarian. Gale et al. found childhood records for about two-thirds of these participants and this data were eventually used for their own study.

Self-declared vegans

Nearly 400 of the 8,170 participants in Gale et al.'s study were self-declared vegans or vegetarians, though nearly a third of the latter admitted eating chicken or fish. (By the way, researchers found no difference in IQ scores between the "straight" and "semi" vegetarians.) Gale et al. found that the average childhood IQ scores of the self-professed vegetarians were at least 5 points higher than the others. Interestingly, when the IQ scores of the vegans were separated out, these were found to be

about 10 points lower than those of the vegetarians. As there were only 9 vegans, however, no conclusions were formed from this note.

Aside from the vegan data, the researchers do note other caveats with this study. For example, the 30-year-old participants were asked if they were vegetarian, but not for how long. As it turns out, about 4,000 of them had taken part in an earlier follow-up study as teenagers and a third of those had claimed to be vegetarian by age 16. Even then, Gale et al. note, the IQ scores of the vegetarians were 4 points higher than those of the nonvegetarians. Still, by age 30, many of these vegetarians had lapsed, which might affect the data.

If the ads for the vegetable-enriched noodles are any indication, children still tend to be picky eaters when it comes to vegetables. Though there are many health-related reasons salads should be more popular, perhaps suggesting that eating them will make one smarter than the sibling or friendly rival who doesn't could tip the balance.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Of math and Christmas

LAST CHRISTMAS, MY INBOX was crammed full not just with readers' answers to our puzzle contest, but also humorous greetings, gentle clarifications, and wise insights. Let's start with a correction. Dr. Vigilio Saldajeno, a pediatric intensivist [vsaldajeno@pol.net] says:

Thank you for your article "Bites That Kill" (Dec. 30, 2006) about dengue which I read online. It was a timely article that I hope will allow your readers to understand the preventative measures that can help break the cycle of transmission. I would like to suggest that using repellent lotions like Off can help. Because the mosquitoes are day-biters, we cannot avoid being in their midst as we go along with our diurnal activities.

You also wrote that "paracetamol can be given to reduce fever, but not aspirin or acetaminophen, since these can increase risk of bleeding." I am sure you meant to avoid aspirin and ibuprofen or naproxen, as paracetamol and acetaminophen pertain to the same drug. Ibuprofen and naproxen and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like aspirin interfere with platelet function, so these need to be avoided when dengue is suspected.

You are right, Dr. Saldajeno. Thank you for the reminder. Paracetamol and acetaminophen are the same drug, under trade names such as Tempra.

Why math is important

For students (and teachers and parents) who hate algebra, the most common excuse is: "I will never become a mathematician. Why should I need to study it?" My answer is: "You may likely not become a poet, but you study poetry. You probably won't be a historian, but you study history. You probably won't be a doctor, but you study biology. So why bemoan the study of math?"

One reason is that math is probably the most difficult subject on the face of the earth. Because it is abstract, the human mind (which is used to things it can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste) cannot readily grasp its concepts. However, studying math requires the mind to think—and that is probably one of its greatest strengths. We Filipinos tend to rely on emotion too much (think about how we elect politicians and who our children's idols are). We need to balance emotion with reason.

Not convinced? How about hearing the same news from an English professor? My colleague

EUREKA!

Queen N. Lee-Chua

Dr. Greg Tangonan sent me a recent online article in the Los Angeles Times. In the article, David Eggen, a professor at the University of Southern California says that he encourages his college students (who want to become creative writers and musicians) to think well, which is easier for them to do since they have already taken math and learned how to think systematically. Eggen adds, "What you learn to think about is not as important as how you learn to think." Math does train us how to think well.

Christmas, psychology style

Aside from math, my other passion is psychology. My student, Benito Chua III, forwarded this amusing (but uncannily accurate) list of Christmas carols for the holidays, from the point of view of clinically disordered people. This is also a great way for clinical psychology professors and psychiatrists to help students remember the different mental health disorders.

Schizophrenia: Do You Hear What I Hear
Multiple Personality Disorder: We Three Kings Disoriented Are

Dementia: I Think I'll Be Home For Christmas
Narcissistic: Hark the Herald Angels Sing About Me

Manic: Deck the Halls and Walls and House and Lawn and Streets and Stores and Office and Town and Cars and Buses and Trucks and Trees and...

Paranoia: Santa Claus Is Coming to Town to Get Me
Borderline Personality Disorder: Thoughts of Roasting on an Open Fire

Personality Disorder: You Better Watch Out, I'm Gonna Cry, I'm Gonna Pout, Maybe I'll Tell You Why

Attention Deficit Disorder: Silent Night, Holy ooh look at the Froggy — Can I have a Chocolate? Why Is France So Far Away?

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Jingle Bells (repeat 100 times exactly)
Have great year ahead!

Queen N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessingbook@yahoo.com.

Doctors intensify goiter awareness

By Charles E. Buban

GOITER IS THE TERM USED to describe an enlargement of the thyroid, a gland located in the middle of the lower neck just below your voice box and just above the collarbones.

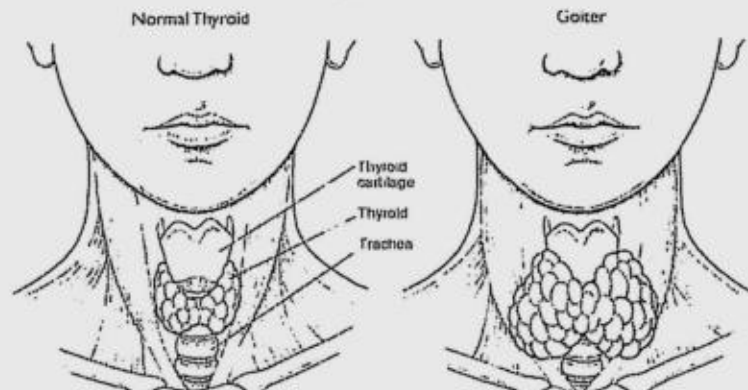
This gland is responsible for manufacturing and releasing a number of different hormones, primarily thyroxine, which plays a large role in directing your body's metabolism and growth functions.

When the thyroid gland swells, it thickens the neck area visibly, causing tenderness or tight feeling in the neck or throat, and in some cases, hoarseness or coughing, as well as difficulty in swallowing or breathing.

Unightly

"In most cases, goiter is not dangerous—the major problem with having this condition is usually appearance as many individuals may find the swelling unsightly. However, goiter typically signals an underlying problem so that any swelling of the neck should immediately be checked by a doctor," reminded Dr. Rosa Allyn Sy during a recent symposium to kick off the first Goiter Awareness Week.

Sy is the president of the Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism (PSEM), the lead organization behind the annual event held every fourth week of the January (for this year, it's from Jan. 22 to 28)



MANIFESTING as a lump in the lower neck area, a goiter could be a sign of an underlying problem in the thyroid gland.

To confirm that the swelling is a goiter, Sy explained that a doctor will usually conduct a blood test to determine the amount of thyroid hormone in the patient's blood and measure the activity of the pituitary gland, which controls the thyroid.

Treatment depends on the type of goiter the doctor identifies.

Various types

Dr. Gabriel Jasul Jr., PSEM director and committee on advocacy



GOITER may cause one's neck to appear swollen. Seeing a doctor is always advised.

chair, explained that there are various types and causes of goiter. "In countries like the Philippines, goiter is often brought on by a lack of iodine in the diet."

Iodine, which is mostly found in fish and other seafood products, milk and fortified table salt, is essential for the production of thyroid hormone. The World Health Organization recommends 100 micrograms to 200 micrograms of iodine daily.

Although a minute quantity of iodine ensures an individual's iodine adequacy, iodine deficiency remains a major public health problem in 130 developing countries, affecting over 740 million people or 13 percent of the world's population.

"If you don't get enough iodine, it can lead to mental and growth retardation. In fact, serious iodine deficiency during pregnancy may re-

sult in stillbirths, abortions and congenital abnormalities such as cretinism, a condition characterized by severe brain damage occurring in very early life," Jasul warned.

Observance important

Sy added that next week's observance of goiter awareness is very important. There's a need to educate more Filipinos about the dangers of having goiter and not doing anything about it.

"Goiter is a preventable disease and we need to make sure there's sufficient iodine added into the food supply," the doctor reminded.

Dr. Josephine Carlos Palanca-Raboca, PSEM VP, explained that Goiter Awareness Week came about after President Macapagal-Arroyo signed on Dec. 11, 2005 Proclamation 1188, which tasked the Department of Health to coordinate with PSEM, among other partner organizations, for the formulation of guidelines and logistics to ensure the success of holding an annual awareness campaign program.

However, PSEM director Dr. Leilani Mercado-Asis reminded that the events related to the Goiter Awareness Week will continue for the rest of the year. "Raising awareness about goiter and iodine deficiency makes sense. While some deficiencies, like lack of vitamin A, can be corrected, if you grow up and your IQ has suffered from iodine deficiency, it's not going to be reversible."



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For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on January 31, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time) of February 16, 2007 for GT-418061R1 and February 15, 2007 for GT-517330. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

(PDI-January 20, 2007)



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Please submit your CURRICULUM VITAE from 8:30 am till 5:30 pm starting 22-25 Jan. only at UNIT 14 A & B, WORLD CENTRE BLDG., #330 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City • Telephone Nos. 8486962 • 8486963

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• 0916-2069813 • 0918-5886075
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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be advised that Ms. Lourdes Agbaya has assigned her one (1) share in Crewcare, Inc. to Ms. Josephine Roldan and she will be the President & General Manager of Crewcare, Inc. effective January 1, 2007.

This notice is made to comply with the rules and regulations of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

(PDI - Jan. 20, 2007)

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages 4-6

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory on the 17th Death Anniversary of **MERCEDES R. CUADRANTE**

*Died in the Grace of our Lord
on January 20, 1990.*

Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila .. 7:15 AM
6:15 PM

Mary The Queen, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila .. 6:00 AM
7:00 AM
6:00 PM

Her family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to say a prayer in her memory for the eternal repose of her soul.

DEATH NOTICE

CELESTINA V. MAGTIRA

April 6, 1916 - Jan. 17, 2007

Died in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 90.

Her body lies at Acacia Rose Chapel, Sanctuary, cor. Quezon Ave. and Araneta Ave. Q.C.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 21, 2007 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Q.C.

TEOTIMAL L. LISTANCO

April 20, 1935 - Jan. 16, 2007

Her body lies at her residence in Pokol, Daraga, Albay.

Interment will be on January 21 at Prestine Memorial after the 2 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church, Tahao Rd., Legaspi City.

LEONARDO C. VELASQUEZ

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 15, 2007.

His remains lie in state at No. 60 E. Castillo, Maypajo, Caloocan City. Interment will be on January 23, 2007 at La Loma Cemetery.

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2

PATRIA NERI VILA

"Pat"

Beloved wife of Prof. Norberto S. Vila (†)
went home to the Lord on January 16, 2007.

We invite relatives and friends to join us to celebrate this occasion at the mortuary of the Claret Church, U.P. Village, Diliman, Q.C.

The Children Addie & Linda
Bert, Jr. & Joey (†)
Winnie
Patricia & Benjie

The Grandchildren Pam & Andrew
Mark, Lara-Jo,
E.Z., Miko
Chico
Patrick, Paolo, Bianca

The Great-grandchildren Brandon, Kyle,
Norbert

Surviving siblings Sol & Ben
Purita
Nena

Interment will be tomorrow,
January 21, 2007, 3 pm at
Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

DR. SABINO S. SANTOS

December 30, 1925 – January 17, 2007

Now rests peacefully in the Grace of our Lord.

Beloved husband of the late **Dra. Remedios A. Santos**,
Dr. Benny Santos is survived by his children, in-laws and grandchildren.

His remains lie in state at the family ancestral home in Brgy. Sto. Niño, Malolos City, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 at the Malolos Catholic Cemetery following the 1:00 p.m. Requiem Mass at the Malolos Cathedral.



Where to stop Where to go

A week's directory
of the country's best establishments

STOR HOTEL
7835 Makati Ave., cor. Eduque St., Makati City
Tel. 750-7500
Email: sales@bestwesternastor.com
www.bestwesternastor.com

ASTORIA PLAZA
15J, Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District,
Pasig City 1600
Tel. 687-1111 / Fax 910-0370
Email: sales@astoriaplaza.com

City Garden
1158A Mabini St., Ermita, Manila
Tel. 536-1451 / Fax 524-4844
Email: cityreservations@citygardenhotels.com

CROWN PLAZA
ADB Avenue cor. Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City
Tel. 633-7222
Email: www.ichotelsgroup.com

CSB HOTEL
Arelano Ave., cor. Estrada St., Malate, Manila
Tel. (02) 400-3333 / Fax 400-7401
Email: customerservice@csbhotel.com

Dusit Hotel Nikko
Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phil.
Tel. 867-3333 / Email: dusitnikko@dusit.co
http://manila.dusit.com

Edsa Shangri-La
Edsa Shangri-La Manila
1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Manila
Tel. 633-8888
www.shangri-la.com

Executive Plaza Hotel
1630 A Mabini St., Malate, Manila
Tel. 523-1000 / Fax 525-8979
Email: sales@executiveplazahotel.com
www.executiveplazahotel.com

Golden Pine Hotel
Km. 72 Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas
Tel. (02) 712-9293 to 98
Fax (02) 712-9299
Manila Sales Office 733 1922/733-9951

GARDEN PLAZA
1030 Bolen St., Paco, Manila
Tel. (632) 522-4835 / Fax (632) 522-4840

Grand Regency Hotel
J.P. Laurel St., Lanang, Davao City
Tel. (382) 235-0888 / (382) 234-3858

Hyatt Regency Manila
1588 Pedro Gil corner M.H. del Pilar,
Manila 1004
Tel. (632) 245 1234 / Fax (632) 247 8688
manila.casino.hyatt.com

Manila Island Resort
Punta Engano Road, Lapu Lapu Cebu
Tel. (632) 231-0288 / Fax (632) 231-1688
www.shangri-la.com

Oakwood
6th Floor, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
Makati City, Metro Manila
Tel. (632) 729-8888 loc. 8101 / Fax. (632) 728-0000 / echaos@oakwood.com.ph
www.oakwood.com

Oasis
Sevilla, City of San Fernando, La Union Phil.
Tel. (072) 242-5621 / Fax. (072) 242-5631
www.oasiscountryresort.com
oasis@slu.com

Subic
Subic Bay, Free Port Zone, Olongapo City
Tel. 243-2222 / Fax 243-0852
www.subicotel.com

SUMMER PLACE HOTEL
Summer Place Hotel
Km. 288 Marcos Highway, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0560, 446-5400-01
www.summerplacebaguio.com

Taal Vista Hotel
Managed by Fuego Hotels & Properties
Km. 60 Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City
Tel. (632) 888-4325, (6346) 413-1000
Email: taalvista@fuegohotels.com

The Marco Polo
CM Recto St. Davao City 8000
Tel. (082) 221-0888 / Fax (082) 225-0111
www.marcopolohotels.com

Manila Pavilions
United Nations Ave., cor. Ma. Orosa Orosa
St., Manila
Tel. 526-1212 / Fax: 526-2552
www.manilapavilion.com.ph

Waterfront Hotel Lahug
1 Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City
Tel. (6332) 232-6888 / Fax (6332) 232-6880
www.waterfronthotels.net

Waterfront Hotel MacLaurin
1 Airport Road, Lapu Lapu City, 6015
Tel. (632) 340-4888 / Fax (632) 340-5693
www.waterfronthotels.net

The Regency Hotel
Elias, Angeles St., Naga City
Tel. (6354) 4772626 / Fax (6354) 4772525

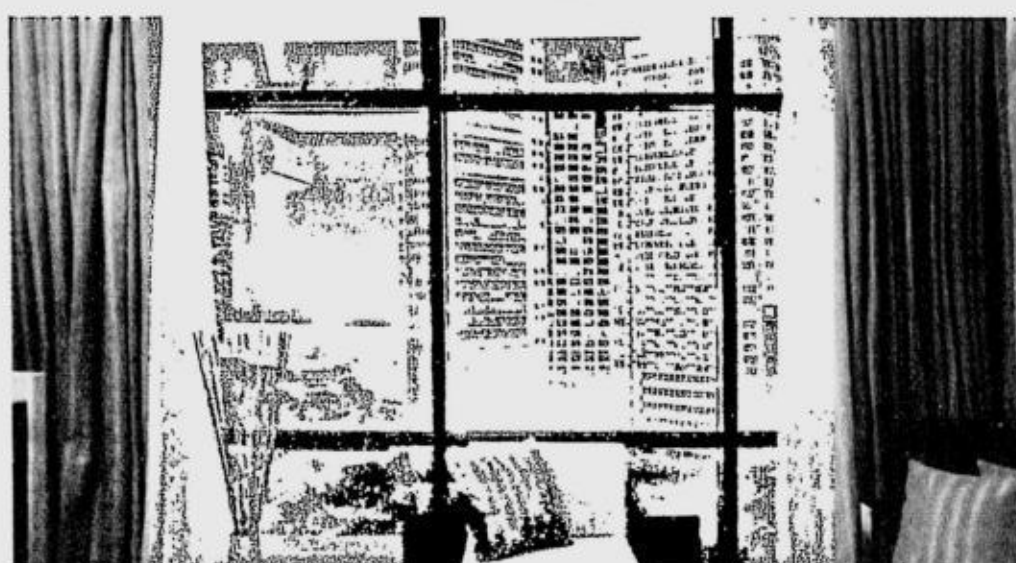
The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeview, Northgate
Alabang, Muntinlupa
Tel. (632) 771-8181 / Fax (632) 771-8282
www.thebellevue.com

The Malayan Plaza
Quantum Serviced Suites
ADB Avenue cor. Opal Road
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. (02) 706-0055 / Fax (02) 635-2969
www.quantumsuites.com

The Malayan Plaza experience

WHEN EXAMINING OPTIONS FOR THEIR booking arrangements, most business and leisure travelers have a set of criteria that they earnestly follow. First up is location - is the hotel easily accessible and near business districts or points of interest? Second, how are the facilities? Are they comfortable and pleasurable for guests to enjoy a relaxing stay? And third, what other amenities are offered to enhance the experience?

Among the more excellent serviced properties available for business and leisure travelers is the Malayan Plaza. Located at the heart of the Ortigas Commercial District, along ADB Avenue corner Opal Road, Malayan Plaza offers furnished Studio, 1 Bedroom and 2 Bedroom units that easily combine aesthetic values, comfort and functionality. Apart from featuring stylish interiors, Malayan Plaza units are also equipped with complete living, dining and kitchen facilities. Other attractions include: cable network television, NDD/IDD telephones, individually controlled air-conditioning, in-room video intercom, broad band internet access in the room, heli-



pad, swimming pool, gym, game room, mini-golf putting green, children's playground and playroom, housekeeping/laundry/concierge services, and 24-hour security. Rates start at P3,800 nett per night in a Studio Superior in-

clusive of buffet breakfast for two (2) persons.

For more information and bookings, contact The Malayan Plaza at tel. no. 706-0055 or e-mail us at sales@quantumsuites.com.

A glimpse of Dusit's exclusive fitness studio

SHAPING UP SOON IN DUSIT HOTEL Nikko is the country's newest Hotel Fitness Centre Club - DFIT. It was conceived with the understanding that regular exercise is good for the human body, mind and spirit. That educating the customers about the principles and practice of regular exercise will provide them the means to achieve and maintain wellness of being. DFIT, by far, is the best place to "shape up" in bustling Makati City.

DFIT will soon be unveiled with the objec-



tive to provide guests and members the full benefits of physical exercise amidst the excellent facilities and five-star service of a deluxe

hotel. "It is our responsibility to provide an environment that will encourage education about physical exercise for our users while making exercise safe, fun and effective. Our challenge is to help members and guests define and practice good health" explained Sonny Orallo, DFIT's fitness club manager.

DFIT is located at the second floor of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Ayala Center, Makati City. For fitness appointments and membership inquiries, please call 867-3333.

"DFIT, The Right Fitness Studio for You."

Somerset Millenium Makati's residence manager

SOMERSET SERVICED residence's area general manager, Arthur Gindap, announces the appointment of Joanne Golong-Gomez as the new residence manager of Somerset Millennium Makati. Gomez started her career in the hotel industry after finishing her tourism degree from the University of the Philippines. She first joined Somerset in 2000 as a sales manager before becoming the area director for sales and marketing in 2002. She gained recognition on her extensive knowledge and capabilities in the field of corporate sales and was hand picked by The Ascott Group to complete a Leadership Development Program in Somerset Ho Chi Minh and Ascott Jakarta. Being the new residence manager of Somerset Millennium Makati, Joanne Gomez aims to focus on people development and further improvement on the service level of the company. With her at the helm, guests can expect a superb level of service at Somerset Millennium Makati! For more information on Somerset Serviced Residences Philippines, contact Cristina Ong-Cruz or Vanessa Calimlim at 888-0531; email cristina.cruz@the-ascott.com or vanessa.calimlim@the-ascott.com.



Prom Party at The Bellevue Hotel



DRESSED TO THE NINES and ready to party the night away? Experience the magic of prom night to the fullest by celebrating it at The Bellevue Grand Ballroom, the premier concert and party venue south of Metro Manila. With its state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, elegant interiors and expert event specialists, you are assured to have an unforgettable prom night.

The Bellevue Prom Package is designed to give its organizers the least of worries and the most of fun. Have a roaring twenties party, a fairytale ball or a winter gala - the Bellevue Grand Ball-

room's versatility makes even themed promenades possible. Amenities of the package include sit-down or buffet dinner, mobile disco, table and buffet centerpieces, one round of iced tea, guestbook and pen and a gift certificate for an overnight stay in a deluxe room with breakfast for two.

The Bellevue Hotel's 20/20 Entertainment Bar, turns Japanese with special dishes for hungry party-goers. The exciting twist to the a la carte menu features yummy Tonkatsu for January and sumptuous Yakitori for February, mouth-watering additions meant to

satisfy distinctive palates.

Bellevue's Cake for Coffee and Caramel Lovers. From the pastry bins and the warm, sweet-smelling baking ovens of The Bellevue comes a special cake for the cold January days. Fudgy Caramel Machiato is The Bellevue Hotel's Cake of the Month for January, a delightful surprise of cream cheese filling, topped with a crust of chewy chocolate fudge brownie with a hint of coffee and caramel. Definitely not for the faint-hearted! Bring one home for the kids or give as a gift for the saccharine-loving soul. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

January blast at City Garden Hotel Makati

IN TIME FOR THE NEW YEAR, CITY GARDEN Hotel Makati, has lined up something new to start the year.

Guest rooms have been upgraded to include flat screen TVs and new furnishings. WIFI can be accessed anywhere in the hotel for very reasonable prices. Enjoy these amenities for as low as P1,450+ per person on twin-sharing basis inclusive of free sumptuous buffet breakfast for two, free use of its open-air swimming pool at the Roof deck and its fully equipped Gym at the Penthouse. Two (2) children below 12 years of age, stay for free.

For those after-holiday get-togethers and reunions, its Party Package comes for as low as P24,750+ inclusive of buffet menu or barbecue grill and discounts on drinks. Its wedding and debut packages come for as low as P59,000+ inclusive of a buffet menu for 100

persons, a cake, souvenirs, floral arrangements, and other amenities. Thus, providing value for money and hassle-free arrangements. Reception venues may be held at its cozy, fully-equipped function rooms or at the al fresco Roofdeck, with a wonderful view of the metropolis.

For those one-on-one meetings, it has two restaurants that you can choose from. The Le Jardin Restaurant, with its warm and relaxing dining experience, and its more popular Roofdeck Bar and Grill that gives you a cozy dining experience with a great view of the Makati skyline.

Those needing extra pampering after the holiday rush, the Bamboo Spa & Massage at the hotel's Upper Penthouse level have special packages to choose from.

City Garden Hotel Makati is located in



Makati's restaurant strip at 7870 Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. For reservations or inquiries, please call (02) 899-1111, or its domestic toll free number 1-800-101-GARDEN (427336), or at www.citygardenhotels.com.

People, Events & Products

A 'Fresher' new you

HEY GIRLFRIENDS! YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF IT BUT AT THIS TIME OF your life, you may be experiencing lots of changes both physically and emotionally. Being sensitive to the needs of young ladies, Lamolyan Corp has come up with a new product that will be every girl's new best friend. Fresher, the newest feminine wash for teens, will help keep young girls feeling clean and smelling fresh everyday, especially during monthly period. Fresher's lactic Acid and lactoserum are active ingredients extracted from milk. It maintains the pH balance and provides natural defense for a woman's external genitalia. But what sets Fresher different from other feminine wash in the market is its breakthrough Herbal Moisture Essence Plus. It hydrates and defends the external genitalia. Fresher has also essential oils and vitamins and a cooling agent that provides young girls that cool and fresh feeling. Fresher comes in different variants to choose from. Fresh 'n Pure for those who are sensitive on fragrances; Fresh Miss (Powder Scent) is apt for young ladies who would want to feel baby fresh; and for a more serious fragrance Fresher's Fresh Bouquet (Floral Scent) will surely be a hit. Fresher Feminine Wash, Gentle Natural Freshness "Kasama sa

SCPA remains environmentally friendly

SANITARY CARE PRODUCTS ASIA (SCPA), MAKERS OF QUALITY PAPER napkin products like Tisyu, Jade, Cheers and Sanicare reiterated its firm commitment towards environmental preservation as it outlined a set of guidelines for its suppliers. SCPA vice-president Ven Sio says, "Sourcing is a key element in any business, and having extra standards might mean extra costs but it also means greater long term sustainability of the business." He adds that having green standards are good for business, especially in the paper business. Sio says SCPA plans to implement the above commitment by ensuring that wood suppliers maintain compliance with all relevant national and international regulations of sustainable forestry and responsible land use management. Sio further states that SCPA expects wood suppliers to comply with relevant universal human rights regulations and that wood suppliers undertake community relations programs based upon participatory assessment and planning principles, involving all relevant stakeholders. For more information on SCPA and its products, call 838-7301 to 02 or visit http://www.sanicare.com.ph.



PROPERTY

Demand full disclosure from realty agents before buying a house

By Tessa R. Salazar

BUYERS SHOULD research and demand information, and developers should give proper information and respect their commitments. Take your time,

listen to different people and do your homework.

This, in a nutshell, is the property players' advice to home buyers. Buy now, but buy wisely.

Gibson Yu, business development manager of build-to-own system GW Architects, said: "Property players should have all the accurate information

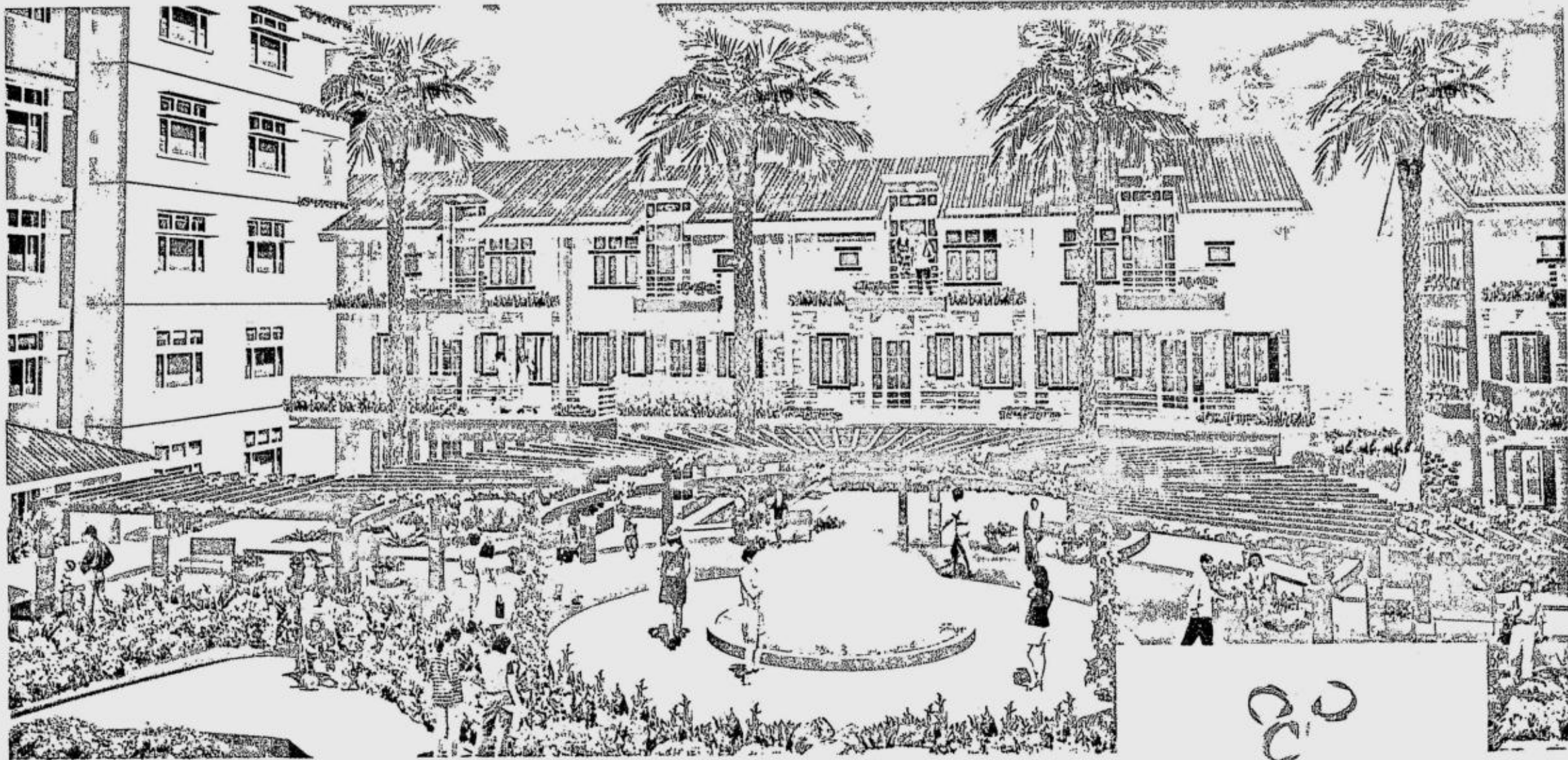
given to clients. Full disclosure could pave the way for buyers to trust property players better."

Kit Vergara, Philtown marketing vice president, said: "Now that Philippine projects are also being sold overseas, property companies should adapt to how business is conducted overseas, e.g. transparency and commitment."

"Buyers should likewise learn to do their due diligence on real estate companies, so that they minimize investment losses, or worse, their retirement nest," Vergara stressed.

Ino Lao, marketing director of Antel Land, said buyers should be more prudent in their choices, and learn to buy not by

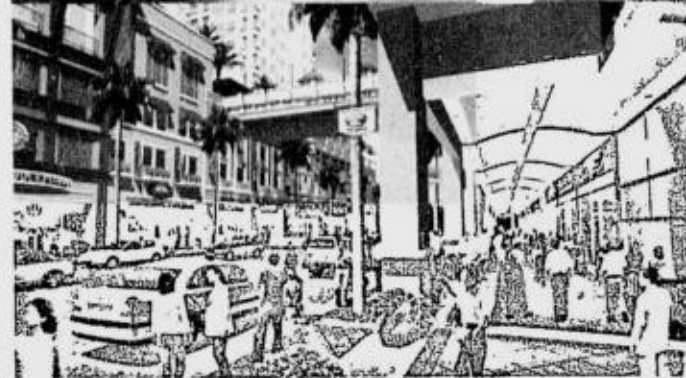
DEMAND/B2-2



A Matchless Location at the Metro's Center.

Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

Go from home to the heart of the action in no time. At Manhattan Parkway, the first phase of Manhattan Garden City, enjoy the benefits of living in the country's first-ever transit-oriented development. Experience the freedom to go places with utmost ease via the LRT-2 and MRT-3. And reach the north, east, west and south sides of Metro Manila in one go. What's more, be a walk away from the Araneta Center and its shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment hubs.



Surrounded by the city's key destinations.

Your Parkway home is encircled by everything the city has to offer. And you're just a train ride away from it all. Walk down an exclusive 729-meter-long garden footbridge four stories above street level. Take in its park-like scenery. And arrive at the LRT-2 and MRT-3 stations safely and without the hassles of traffic.

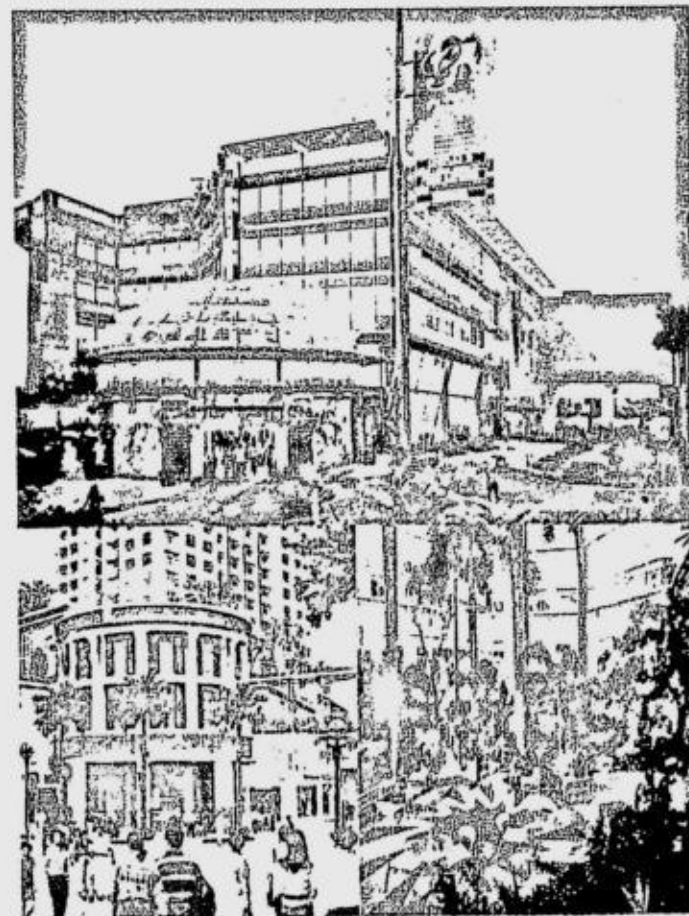
From the LRT-2 along Aurora Boulevard, Ateneo and UP in Quezon City and Manila's university belt are just minutes away. The MRT-3 along EDSA brings Makati, Ortigas and Taft Avenue within easy reach. Both lines join up with the LRT-1, making it easy to go anywhere from Monumento in Caloocan to Baclaran in Parañaque.

Surrounded by the Araneta Center's hot spots.

Be in the middle of a pulsating lifestyle and leisure center: the Araneta Center. From your home, a four-story transfer station with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators brings you to the third level of Gateway Mall, which hosts the Oasis, a unique floating garden. From here, simply walk to the Araneta Coliseum. Or to Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall or Farmers Plaza.

Surrounded by the comforts of home.

When you're done exploring the world outside, your home is just a breath away. Whether it's an executive studio or one-bedroom suite, Manhattan Parkway offers you soothing views of the Araneta Center and Manila Bay. What's more, enjoy hours of active play at the fourth-level garden deck. There are trellised walkways, jogging trails, a fitness station, an indoor sauna/spa and a gym. And if that's not enough, a footbridge leads to more play amenities at the upcoming phases.



Visit our SHOWROOM
at the third floor of the Gateway Mall.

Joint Venture Partner:

Araneta Center
www.aranetacenter.net

Exclusive Marketing Agent:



MEGAWORLD CENTRAL PROPERTIES, INC.
inquire@themanhattangardencity.com

DEVELOPER:



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most important decision of your life.

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Choose from our revolutionary, budget-friendly packages,
including HOMELITE 10, HOMELITE 15 or HOMELITE 25.

For more details, inquire from our HOMELITE specialist. Call 810-3333 now.

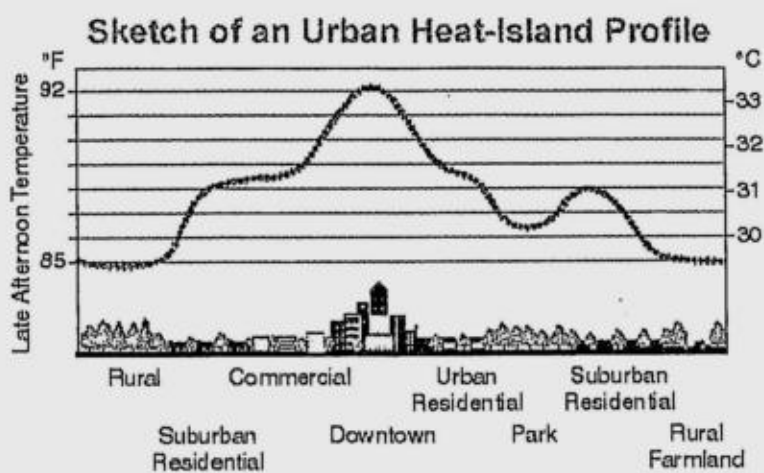
PROPERTY

B2-2



A GREEN roof is an effective way to cut down heat by simulating the natural ability of that site to reduce the heat from the sun. If this could be replicated on a citywide scale, the whole city's temperature will definitely decrease.

WWW.ICREPORG



THE URBAN heat island effect is the phenomenon brought about by cities that have very little greenery and a lot of concrete surfaces. The illustration shows the temperature differences in a typical community ranging from rural to suburban residential areas.

HEAT ISLAND GROUP

The heat island effect

WHY CAN IT GENERALLY BE SAID to be hotter in urban areas than in rural areas? Many people would surmise that it is due to the pollution in the city, or because the wind is blocked by buildings or maybe even due to air-conditioning exhaust. Though these may partially explain the phenomenon of hot cities, these are not really as critical as the heat island effect.

What environmental factors differ between the urban and the rural setting? Obviously, that would be the presence of so many square miles of concrete, in its many forms and applications. Now, what of it? How does the presence of concrete increase the heat of the surroundings?

Problem

The problem lies with concrete's thermal properties. (Concrete is the mixture of cement, sand, gravel and water.) To put it simply, concrete is capable of absorbing heat when its surroundings are hotter than it is; it can also release heat when its surroundings are cooler than it is. Therefore, during the day concrete absorbs the heat of the sun and releases it at night. Should one touch concrete exposed to sunlight, he will immediately notice that it is warm.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus



The difference between concrete and soil is that soil does not trap the heat of the sun which it receives. In addition to this, the grass or plants growing on the soil use the sun's energy for photosynthesis, which is the plants' way of getting nutrition.

In large urban spaces, the trapping of the sun's heat in concrete roads, building envelopes, bridges, etc. really raises the temperature of the city by as much as 6-8°F than its surrounding areas. This is even compounded by the problem of the heat bouncing off concrete surfaces only to be bounced back by more concrete surfaces.

Another element in the city that contributes to the heat island effect is the extensive use of dark pavements like asphalt in roadways and parking lots. These black surfaces can become as much as 70°F hotter than most reflective white surfaces.

Dark roofs also add to the heat

island effect. Aside from this negative effect, some of the heat absorbed by dark roofs are transmitted to the room or space below.

So what exactly is the heat island effect? This phenomenon is what results from cities that have very little greenery and very many concrete surfaces. The city will have a much higher temperature than that of the surrounding suburbs and countryside. Figuratively, it forms an "island" of hotter land, while being surrounded by cooler land.

This is why air conditioning is used extensively in cities, while rural areas do not spend so much on cooling.

Solution

This now explains the scientific advantages of the use of plants. Builders and planners must realize that surrounding gardens and plants reduce a building's temperature (and cooling costs) dramatically.

The land's natural ecosystem has been changed by so much paving and building of concrete monoliths. To counter the absorption of heat by the environment's concrete; the use of green roofs greatly reduces urban heat gain.

A green roof is usually a flat

roof that has a layer of soil and plants on top of it. Even if the building has displaced so much soil, if the roof is a green one, then it simulates the natural ability of that site to reduce the heat from the sun. If this could be replicated on a citywide scale, the whole city's temperature will definitely decrease.

Bodies of water can also reverse the heat island effect and hopefully reduce it. Sometimes the advantages of ponds and fountains are not purely esthetic.

Pervious or porous pavements for walkways and parking areas allow rainwater to gradually filter through the soil and recharge the aquifer. This lessens the impact of a sudden downpour, and helps cool the area.

Finally, we should let go of the mindset that the presence of more concrete is a sure sign of progress and technological development. On the contrary, a true measure of progress is in the planning and designing of our cities in such a way as to meet our requirements while maintaining the natural conditions of our environment.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.

Brittany Bay envisioned as Bay City with P25B capitalization

P25 BILLION HAS BEEN SET aside to create a world-class, high-end, multidimensional urban development of the Sucat Exit and on the South Luzon Expressway.

Maverick real estate developer Brittany Bay is behind this metropolitan hub of a scale that is unprecedented. When completed, the over 60 hectares of Brittany Bay is envisioned to be larger in scope than any current developments including Araneta Center, Eastwood City, and Newport City.

The Brittany Bay development is being undertaken in partnership with the landed Marfori-Posadas family. Doña Estela Marfori Posadas of the illustrious Marfori-Posadas family began what would be a legacy of excellence in developing residential communities.

In a nutshell, it will offer a combination of residential (both horizontal and vertical), commercial, business and institutional enclaves taking inspiration from the San Francisco Bay Area. The community is a masterfully planned, taking advantage of the topography and the natural structure of the land and affording its residents a stunning 180-degree view of the Laguna de Bay and the Sierra Madre mountains.

Access, connectivity

But more than that, Brittany Bay is offering access and connectivity to its residents. Literally a city unto itself, homeowners can work and play within its boundaries. A central business district will be created to house offices, call centers and business process outsourcing. A commercial transport park will be integrated to ensure flexibility of movement.

Completing the development is a retail center with themed shopping, a city sports and country club, and entertainment hubs. As early as now, guests of Brittany Bay can enjoy good food and music at the Brittany Bay Commercial Center which houses Grappa's, Figaro, Brothers Burger, Murasaki, Hap Chan and Dencio's Grill for a wide selection of dining options.

Among the most notable

features that Brittany Bay offers is the expanse of open space. Children can safely enjoy the outdoors at the central park where such activities can be accommodated. Pocket garden spaces are purposefully landscaped to create a carpet of grass and a canopy of trees for a truly relaxing environment.

Here, residents can enjoy a variety of activities such as jogging and hiking. Biking trails also meander throughout the property. Such areas situated in strategic places all over the property not only offers a safer place for outdoor activities but improves the quality of air within the area as well as protection from the elements.

Also within the commercial center is the Brittany Bay Center for Music and Arts where residents can take music and dance lessons. A boutique hotel, schools, a hospital and a cultural center and museum are also part of this grand masterplan.

Location

The location of Brittany Bay also provides access to major destinations outside its boundaries. The airport and the central business district of Makati are just 20 minutes away. It is also situated at the gateway to the growing southern urban centers such as Sta. Rosa and Cavite.

Brittany Bay can be reached through four major access points—the East Service Road by the Sucat Exit, the East Service Road a kilometer away from the Bicutan Exit, the South Railway that spans from Clark, Pampanga to Bicol, and the Circumferential Road 6 link.

To date, several properties espousing the cause of urban renewal has already been established. The communities include: La Posada, single-detached homes with picturesque bay windows and porches; Victorienne, townhomes reminiscent of the San Francisco Postcard Row; Presidio, a complex of six to eight low-rise condos with intertwined commercial establishments; and The Marfori, an exclusive enclave of 10 to about 20-stories upscale condominiums.



THE MARFORI is an exclusive enclave of 10 to about 20-story upscale condominiums at Posadas-Brittany Bay.

Demand full disclosure from realty . . .

From page B2-1

impulse or by marketing gimmicks but based on actual use and need.

Eric M. Soriano, ERA Philippines' country president and CEO, said that since real estate is a high-trust industry, it is important for buyers to invest in developers with a solid track record.

"When buying real estate, look for projects that underscore community-based developments," he said.

Soriano, whose company is a multinational real estate service provider, stressed: "Most importantly consider developers that have long established equity in the brand and are globally recognized."

Another advice Vergara gave to home buyers is: "Go with reputable developers, know the people behind the company, look at how much experience in real estate they have and how many projects they have completed." He said a buyer should choose investments wisely, stressing that location is an im-

portant factor.

Crown Asia president Jerry Navarette advised: "Take advantage of the property boom in the country. It has been one of the best years for this industry and let us continue to work together and do our share in keeping our economy moving forward to make sure each Filipino's dream, of having his/her own home, becomes a reality."

A buyer's ally

INQUIRER Property also shared last year how inclement weather could become a buyer's "ally" in deciding whether a certain property is worth it or not. Bad weather lets you see things you wouldn't see during the dry season, whether you're planning to buy a vacant lot, a beach home, a commercial property or a residential home.

Practicing green architect Amado de Jesus said last year the rainy season would be the best time to check for soil erosion and poor sewerage and drainage system in the area. "If the next lot is higher, especially at the back, where does water

flow? Does it flow into your lot?"

A downpour would also be the perfect time to see if your prospective subdivisions have poor drainage systems.

Alexis A. Acacio, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER last year that visiting the site during the rains would show the area's traffic behavior as well. It would also show if the roads have a siltation problem (prone to developing mud). Mud on the road is a telltale indication of the "looseness" of the soil where the road is situated. Rains would also betray poor "ingress and egress" of the location, or the accessibility of the location as access roads are as important as the site itself.

Acacio stressed that rains would also reveal the area's vulnerability to landslides.

Tell-tale signs

Aside from ocular inspection, Acacio added that potential buyers should ask residents if the area floods when it rains.

Two tell-tale signs of chronic flooding are the presence of sandbags and unusually elevated homes in the area.

The rainy season can also reveal poorly maintained, thus dangerous, electrical systems. However, electrical inspections should be conducted with the assistance of professionals, Acacio stressed.

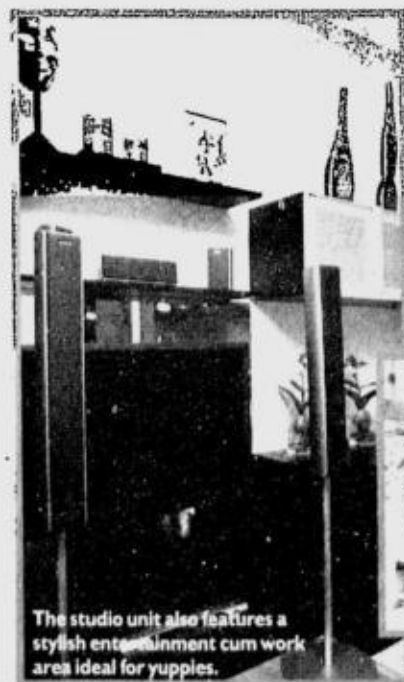
Another indicator is a wet ceiling, which would hint of a leaky roof.

Acacio added that when it is not raining, be watchful of watermarks in the ceiling as these are signs of a defective roof system. Also look out for porous walls, firewalls and walls that are continuously exposed to rainfall. These walls manifest leaks and moisture if they are not properly made and maintained.

If a property is adjacent or near a river or lake, check the site during heavy rainfall and watch for overflows.

Also take note of warped cabinets. If the wall behind the cabinet has a water leak, then the wooden cabinet would naturally warp.

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Through Homelite, this Manhattan Garden City studio unit comes out at a very affordable P10,847 monthly.

MRT, is one of the pilot projects of Megaworld for Homelite. Homebuyers can take advantage of the lowest interest rate ever - 5.50% annually for a five-year loan term at no down payment. "This is ideal for investors who have a strong cash flow and who want to save years of paying interest," noted Megaworld Central Properties Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

An ideal alternative is to stretch the home loan to 10, 15 or even 25 years to pay, with affordable monthly payments. The rates are also very attractive: from 8.50% to 11.00% annually and can be fixed for 25 years. "At the longest term of 25 years, our 22.5-square meter studio unit comes out at a very affordable P10,847 monthly. This is the best chance for many individuals to own a home, at prices they can afford," Yu added. The same flexibility of low interest and low monthly amortizations are also being offered for 1br and 2br units for families.



Hundreds of investors and homebuyers are excited to check out the Manhattan Garden City model units everyday at the third level of Gateway Mall at the Araneta Center.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2007

PROPERTY

HomeSafe system detects pest . . .

From page B2-4

port," he said.
According to him, the inspector certifies that there are no termites. At the same time, he'll report problems like leaks and defects. The equipment is composed of an infrared camera, which directly and quickly scans the house for suspicious spots. These spots are then scanned with a moisture meter, which identifies either termites or leaks. To determine if termites are the problem, an acoustic sensor is used on the area.

'Clearer picture'

David elaborated that certain potential problems that aren't seen through ordinary means can now be safely distinguished. "We're now putting more science into the art of termite inspection, using the HomeSafe tools. It was developed by HomeSafe Inspection Mississippi to provide a 'clearer picture' to the homeowner. I first saw the technology in Singapore. I read about it, wrote the company, they responded, and we came to an agreement," he said.

He added that certain protocols had to be followed for a better understanding of the readings, and that he and the inspectors needed to learn these new procedures. "Four of us went to Mississippi to train in the proper use of the equipment for a week. We had to learn how to analyze infrared images and studied sounds created by different species of termites," David revealed.

Benefits of HomeSafe tech

He explained the benefits of enlisting this new system of detection: "The inspection won't just be the traditional and



PEST-AWAY undergoes training on the use of the infrared camera

limited ways like ocular checks, and the wood-knocking method anymore. For treatment purposes, we'll know if there are surviving termites or rodents. It can help out the homeowner by also identifying hotspots, electrical overloads that can cause fires.

"HomeSafe can complement our current treatment procedures. There's more accuracy; it's easier to pinpoint the live pests. It's noninvasive, meaning we don't puncture the wooden surface to look for them. The infrared camera will look through wooden walls for you. It marks a difference in temperature on the surface. Cold spots, caused by the water, could be brought by termites or leaks will stand out," David added.

This will further complement

PestAway's commitment to eliminating bug and rodent problems, and providing the homeowners preventive knowledge to arm themselves against grave damage in the future.

"Normally, when we do a HomeSafe inspection, we provide the homeowner with a detailed report with lists of what we have seen, and the probable causes. The findings will definitely benefit them, as it will cut down on guesswork. We can verify if there really are pests or not. We're banking on this to make Pest-Away (861-3403 to 04) more efficient and that will translate to better service for our clients. They'll be getting their money's worth," David said.

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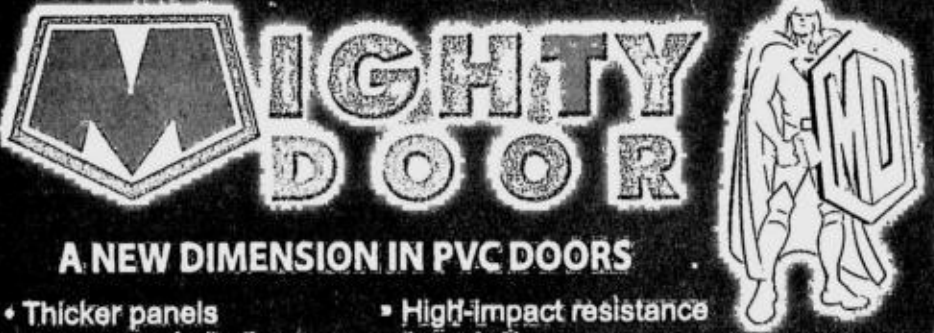
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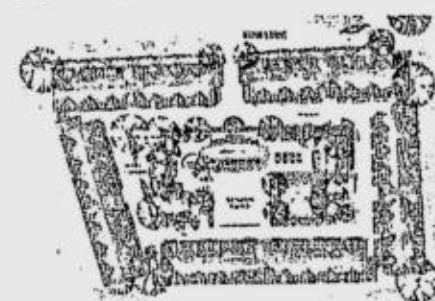


ARTIST'S rendition of RHI forthcoming development in Tagaytay City

Courtyard community to rise in Tagaytay City

By Charles E. Buban

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of Bloomfields Tagaytay development, Robinsons Homes Inc. (RHI) announces another project that will soon rise in the city known for its cool weather and great views.



WITH THE COURTYARD in the middle, RHI said its forthcoming project will encourage more interaction among its residents.

"We haven't thought of a name, yet, but it will be a country-inspired courtyard community this time," informed Marilu Alferez, RHI SVP and general manager.

To rise at the corner of Mahogany avenue and Mayor's Drive, this 9,365-square-meter project will feature five-story medium-rise residences surrounding a courtyard where residents and their guests could converge.

"Initial plans for this courtyard would include setting up amenities like a main swimming pool, a reflecting pool and a wading pool. A multipurpose open court sprawled at the center for sports and special events is also being planned. Beside it will be an administration building that will also serve as a clubhouse," Alferez described.

Friendly setting

She added that the planned lines of grown trees, gazebos, open playground and picnic grounds within the courtyard are designed to provide a friendly setting for families and neighbors to socialize, relax and unwind and get that everyday "weekend" feeling.

To complement Tagaytay's natural beauty, RHI decided to give each of the five buildings western-style design.

"Each of the building's exterior will bear dominant earth colors, warm hues, burgundy and wood. With seven units sitting on a typical floor area, each unit will consist of a master bedroom and an additional bedroom, a kitchen, dining area and living room. Each unit will have a balcony that will provide generous view of Tagaytay's surroundings," Alferez said.

Heralded as one of the country's most-favored destinations for vacation getaways nearest Metro Manila, Tagaytay will soon see an emerging residential project to lure prospective home buyers who prefer taking up permanent residence for a second home.

5-minute drive

Alferez said the planned development is just five minutes away from a gourmet strip and Tagaytay's other popular dining destinations. "It's also near places for recreational activities such as horseback riding, hiking, boating, swimming, sightseeing, camping and golf."

Alferez explained that the growing annual influx of remittances from overseas Filipino workers is among the reasons that emboldened RHI to embark on another project in Tagaytay.

"This indicates a growing propensity of this group of home buyers to invest in more permanent, long-term assets. We're positive that prospective buyers will appreciate our forthcoming development, which is a choice to own a second home where their families can spend quality vacation outside Metro Manila," explained Alferez whose company (rhi@robinsonsland.com), is the housing subsidiary of Robinsons Land Corp., a real estate giant known for its industrial plants, malls and condominiums.

HomeSafe system detects pest, unseen problems

KEEPING TRACK OF TERMITE ATTACKS and detecting previously unknown house defects are now easier and more accurate. Pest-Away Corp., a leading pest control company, formed in 1999 and based in Muntinlupa City, is introducing HomeSafe inspection to Philippine homes. The use of specially designed devices by extensively trained pest control operators has proven effective and time-saving for many American homeowners, and that same focus on precision can now be expected with the availability of HomeSafe technology and inspections.

PestAway president Jonathan David said that figuring out the current condition of one's house has become faster, for both his company and the client. "HomeSafe Inspection was developed at the US Department of Agriculture-funded National Center for Physical Acoustics in Mississippi. It was designed to be an efficient and harmless way to detect different house problems. In the US, when you buy a house, it's mandated by law that there should be a 'wood-destroying insect re-

HOMESAFE/B2-3



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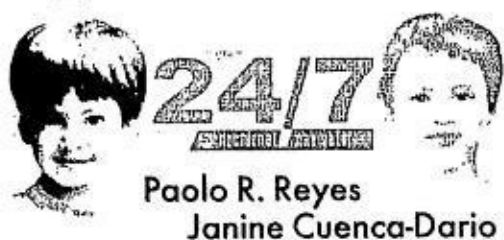


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Photography: RYAN LIM
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Cool Quartet



Paolo R. Reyes
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UNLIKE THEIR TWENTYSOMETHING contemporaries, international pop-opera supergroup, Il Divo, took a gamble by choosing to make a career out of a non-mainstream musical genre.

Of course, under the aegis of a heavy-weight producer like American Idol's Simon Cowell, their starry-eyed venture can hardly be considered a risk. Especially for a dashing, multinational foursome that enjoys belting out Bocelli-esque tunes in passionate European tongues over a conspicuously sad violin and Spanish guitar.

Tonight at 8 p.m., all roads lead to the PICC Plenary Hall [CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City] for their special one-night concert. Prepare yourself for a symphonic mix of quasi-classical pop songs and heart-breaking ballads performed live by the chart-topping quartet of American tenor David Miller, French singer Sébastien Izambard, Spanish baritone Carlos Marín, and Swiss soloist Urs Bühler. Call 891-9999.

Other Super! 24/7 events:

Jan. 20, Saturday
Sugarfree, Happy Meals, Cambio, Wake Up Your Seatmate, Giniling Festival, and Pedicab at Saguijo; Weekender w/ DJs Paolo Maralit & Cao Ocampo at Jill's; Lounge-O-Rama w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Luscious w/ DJ Kevin Ruiz at Mezz; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; DJ Bam at Government; DJs Scratchmark & Jenna at Prince of Jaipur

Jan. 21, Sunday
Peter Pan at CCP Main Theater; Hunan Food Festival at Tin Hau; ZsaZsa Zaturannah: Ze Muzikal! at CCP; Jazz Sunday Brunch w/ Vince Lahorra at M Café; Champagne Buffet Lunch at Paseo Uno

Jan. 22, Monday
Parokya ni Edgar at Conspiracy; Imago at 70s Bistro; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah!

Jan. 23, Tuesday
Radioactive Sago Project, Blast Ople, Narda, Day One Movement, Ciudad, and Monsterbot at Saguijo; Session Road at Conspiracy; Zenaida Celdran & JFK at 70s Bistro; Marissa Sanchez at Music Museum; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt

Jan. 24, Wednesday
Women in Italian Cinema at CCP Dream Theater; Kapatid, Agaw Agimat, Datu's Tribe, The Wuds, and Color It Red at Saguijo; Look Models Night at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Skyy High at Vida Malate; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; DJ Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur; Noel Cabangon at Conspiracy; Retro Night w/ DJ Bobby Nolasco at Prince of Jaipur (Mall of Asia); DJ Brit at Government; Jazz Night at Mag:net Café

Jan. 25, Thursday
Chillites, Itchyworms, and Silent Sanctuary at 70s Bistro; Jammin Reggae w/ Brownman Revival at Conspiracy; DJ Boyet Almazan at Fiamma; SPIT at Mag:net Café; JB Showband Revival at Captain's Bar; Open Mic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; Thirsty Thirst-days at Bed

Jan. 26, Friday
Up Dharma Down & Cynthia Alexander at Saguijo; Kuh Ledesma & Pops Fernandez at Captain's Bar; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; Flammable Fridays w/ DJ Mau Torres at Mezz; DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; Soul Shine w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive w/ DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Jenna at Prince of Jaipur; Acoustic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; Gogo Fridays at Bed

For more info, text 24/7 GIGS and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 NOCTURNAL NAVIGATOR at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com.



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APPLE iPhone promises to revolutionize the phone by allowing users to touch music, visit actual websites, view photos, multitask and use our fingers like never before.

SUPER EXCLUSIVE!

Steve Jobs calling

Everyone has been talking about the iPhone — newspapers, TV shows, bloggers, Mac fans, Mac critics, even your normally tech-challenged parents. But Super! can do it better — because we were there

By Pam Pastor

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—DAYS BEFORE APPLE CEO STEVE Jobs' already legendary keynote speech at the Moscone Center at this year's Macworld Conference and Expo, the excitement was already tangible. Walking down Market Street, you hear words like "Apple," "Mac" and Jobs' name flying around like the city's ubiquitous birds. Ads for the new iPod shuffle and Macworld announcements were seen all over the city—punctuation marks of sorts between huge department stores and countless boutiques. Friendly salespeople, waitresses and cable car operators nod knowingly and say, "Oh, you're here for Macworld."

A woman in Santa Cruz posted an ad on Craigslist.com, trying to find a carpool buddy to go to the expo's venue. People talked about meeting at 4 a.m. and, armed with coffee and donuts, queuing up in hopes of witnessing Jobs' big reveal. Some enthusiasts started camping out at 9 the previous night. Even Macy's Department Store on O'Farrell Street joined in on the fun, switching off the Y on their huge sign so that it read "mac s."

The truth is, when you are in San Francisco and it's Macworld Expo season, you couldn't help but be affected, too.

Secrecy

The secrecy of Jobs' keynote is always a big part of the excitement. Months before Moscone Center opens its doors to throngs of Apple-loving people, all kinds of rumors are thrown around the Internet and the industry about what the big surprise will be. And people have learned not to ignore these rumors. These aren't tall tales that people just pull out of their behinds—they actually have a habit of turning out to be true, just like Mac OS X running on Intel, the existence of flash-based iPods, an iPod with video playback and videos and movies becoming available at the iTunes Store.

This time, the rumors were even more abundant than usual. People talked about the development of the "iTV," a product Jobs had introduced to a small crowd at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco last year in September; the possibilities of the iPhone; a full-screen iPod Video; a supposed tie-up with a US phone service provider; an Apple tablet PC and more. But it was clear that the most anticipated news was about Jobs' attempt to rock the mobile phone world. Enthusiasts have devoted entire blogs to what they think the iPhone will look like, uploading photos from different Jobs-wannabes. And blogs aren't the only ones helping spread these assumptions, newspapers and TV shows had been feeding the hype, coming

up with their own speculations as well. Even American Morning on CNN couldn't resist taking the plunge, cheekily displaying "the first prototype of the iPhone"—a silver iPod mini and a clamshell phone held together by a rubber band.

Trolling through the rumors was fun but even until Tuesday morning, as people stood outside Moscone Center in the cold, waiting so they can grab good seats, no one knew for sure if a phone was going to be announced. But then Steve Jobs walked onstage and said, "We're gonna make some history together today."

And make history he did.

The iPhone

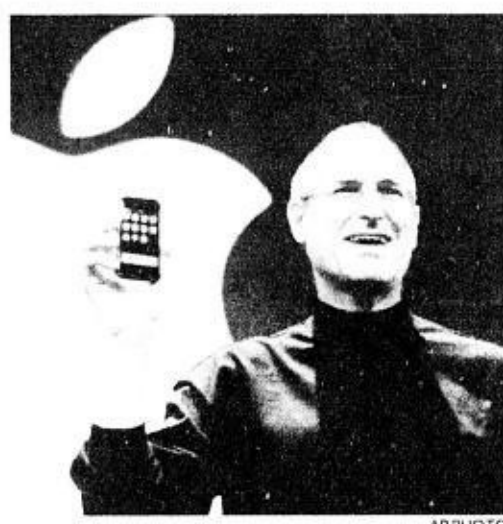
Jobs said, "Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything. Apple has been very fortunate that it's been able to introduce a few of these into the world. In 1984 we introduced the Macintosh and it changed the whole industry. In 2001 we introduced the first iPod and it changed the entire music industry. Today, we're introducing three revolutionary new products. The first one is a widescreen iPod with touch controls. The second is a revolutionary new mobile phone. And the third is a breakthrough Internet communications device. An iPod, a phone, an Internet mobile communicator. An iPod, a phone, an Internet mobile communicator. These are not three separate devices. And we are calling it... iPhone."

The crowd had gone wild by this time but he was only getting started.

"iPhone is a revolutionary and magical product that is literally five years ahead of any other mobile phone," Jobs said.

Jobs referred to their new product as the reinvention of the phone, poking fun at silliness of existing "smartphones." He said, "The problem is they're not so smart and they're not so easy to use."

Intending to cut his slice of the cell phone market, Jobs and his army of engineers and designers attacked what they believe are the flaws of smartphones available in the market today—fixed keypads, the need for a stylus (Jobs said, "Who wants a stylus? Yuck!"), battery life ("A lot of these phones have low battery life. We've managed to get five hours of battery of talk time, video, and browsing. And 16 hours of audio playback.") and more. They stopped at little in their quest to achieve what they wanted, filing for 200 different patents for all their inventions in the iPhone, one of which is the new Multi-Touch technology which allows you to use your fingers not just for pressing icons but to scroll and zoom in and out of images and webpages. Multi-Touch isn't your regular touch-screen technology, it can recognize when touches are accidental. "It is far more accurate than any interface ever shipped—and boy, have we patented it!" Jobs said.



AP PHOTO



SCENES from Steve Jobs' keynote at Moscone Center

PHOTOS BY PAM PASTOR

Jobs also believes he and his team have revolutionized the most basic function of a mobile phone—making calls. "What's the killer app? The killer app is making calls! It's amaz-

ing how hard it is to make calls on most phones. We want to let you use contacts like never before."

Trick after trick

Jobs, who announced that he had been looking forward to that moment for two and a half years and that he didn't sleep the previous night from too much excitement, dazzled the crowd with the features of the iPhone. Like a seasoned magician he pulled trick after trick after trick out of his new sleek and shining baby.

Quad-band GSM + EDGE. Wi-Fi. Bluetooth 2.0. Multiple SMS conversations. Conference calls. OS X running on a mobile device. Safari. The home button. Visual voicemail. A 2-megapixel camera. Advanced sensors. Scrolling with your fingers. Pinching to zoom in and out of webpages and photos. A 3.5-inch screen ("The highest resolution screen we've ever shipped, 160 pixels per inch," according to Jobs.) Album art. The ability to touch your music. Built-in speakers. Cover Flow. Google Maps. Rich HTML e-mails. The first fully usable browser on a cell phone. Widgets. Free push-IMAP e-mail from Yahoo. And a lot more.

Audible gasps, enthusiastic applause and exclamations of wonder were heard from the audience, even from the side of the usually stoic members of the media.

4,000 lattes

The speech wasn't just a speech, the demo not just a demo. It was a performance. Jobs used the iPhone's SMS feature to schedule a sushi dinner. He made the first public phone call using the iPhone—and it was to Jonathan Ive, Apple's chief designer, who said of the phone, "It's not too shabby, is it?" Jobs also called a nearby Starbucks and said, "Yes, I'd like to order 4,000 lattes to go, please. Sorry, wrong number, thank you!" to the amusement of the audience.

A friend who witnessed one of Jobs' demos told him, "You had me at scrolling." And many people at the Moscone—those at the keynote who gave him a standing ovation, those who crowded around the glass-encased iPhone display at the expo and those of us who were able to play with the iPhone even for just five minutes—agree.

Jobs ended his iPhone demo with a heartfelt expression of appreciation for the families of Apple employees. "They haven't seen a lot of us in the last six months. Without their support we couldn't do what we do. You don't know how much we need you and appreciate you, so thank you."

When the iPhone is finally rolled out—in June in the US (with Cingular as the exclusive US carrier), at the end of the year in Europe and in 2008 in Asia—mobile phone users will be thanking those families too.

John Mayer ended the keynote with a surprise performance. He said, "Apple Inc. just makes life more fun—it's the exact opposite of terrorism."

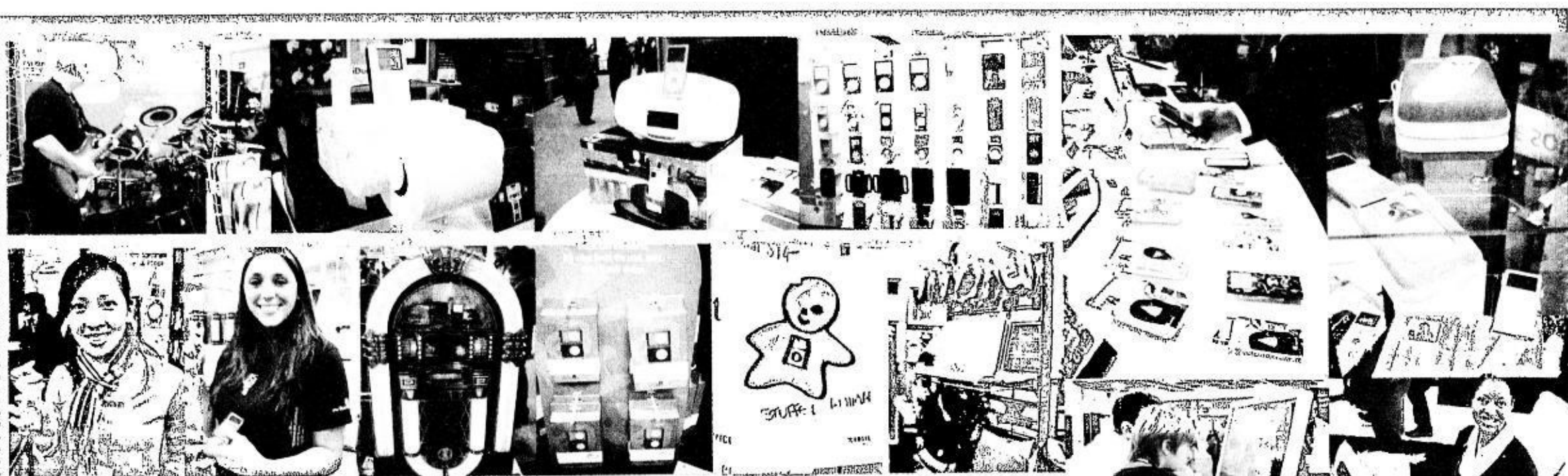
The iPhone is not ready to be shipped yet but, detractors or no detractors, the world already knows that Jobs has another hit in his hands.

The 4-gig iPhone will cost \$499 while the 8-gig iPhone will be sold for \$599. Watch Steve Jobs' iPhone introduction at www.apple.com/iphone/keynote.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.

MACY'S showed Apple some love by switching off the Y on their sign.





Expo exploration

An iPod ready to go, a role
player holder with an iPod dock.
The 10th Edition Educational
Tool Kit and Robin Williams are
just some of the attention-
grabbers at this year's Macworld
Conference and Expo.

PRODUCED BY IDG WORLD Expo, Macworld Conference and Expo means different things to different people. A yearly reunion, a chance to bond with people who share the same passion, a business opportunity, an occasion for networking, a shopping spree, a fix for the technology junkie, a treasure trove of new discoveries, a place for spotting talent and hot products—and even the occasional celebrity.

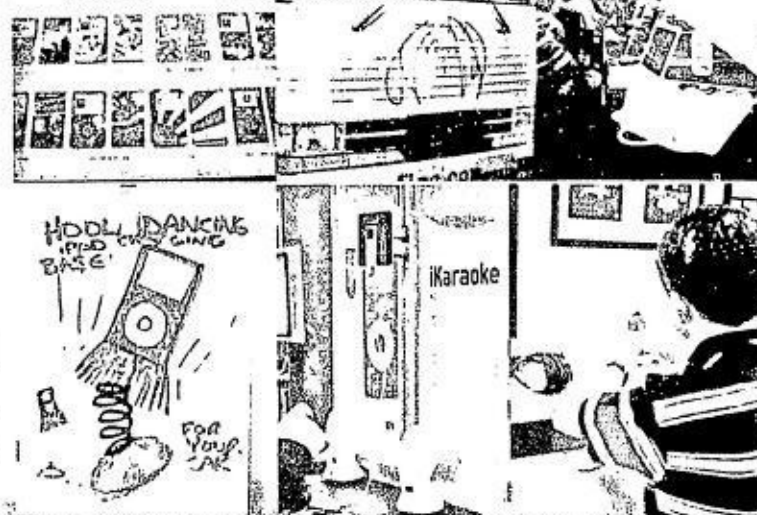
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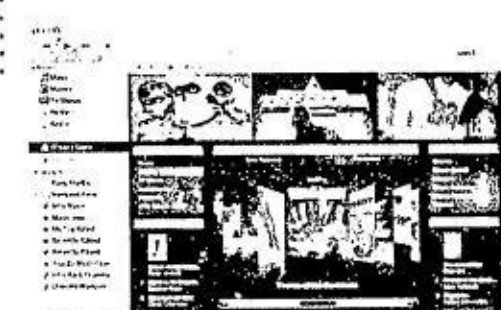
products—lots and lots of products. Protective gear for laptops—everything from soft and hard to practically nonexistent, all kinds of software, storage devices, iPod docks (even a jukebox with an iPod dock!), speakers and about a gazillion other accessories, universal fit earphones, bags and pouches for various gadgets and more.

Attendees were able to meet interesting people, snag bargains, bring home freebies, join raffles, learn new skills and—if they were lucky—even hang out with Kevin Smith and Robin Williams.

Pam Pastor



PHOTOS BY PAM PASTOR



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Cellular eclipse

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iPhone this, iPhone that, what about Apple TV?

its 40 GB hard drive, Apple TV can store up to 50 hours of video, 9,000 songs, 25,000 photos or a combination of the three. Connecting Apple TV to a broad range of widescreen TVs and home theater systems is easy—it comes with HDMI, component video, analog and optical audio ports. Using high-speed AirPort 802.11 wireless networking, Apple TV works with iTunes 7 (or a later version) and can autosync content from one computer or stream content from up to five additional computers to your TV—without the hassle of wires.

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AirPort Extreme with 802.11n. Five times the goodness. Apple's new AirPort Extreme delivers five times the performance and twice the range of the previous AirPort Extreme, making it easier to stream digital content and transfer large files faster. "The new AirPort Extreme is the most powerful and easy to use Wi-Fi base station that we have ever made," said Phil Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing.

Two Billion songs—and more. Jobs said,

"We have crossed a major milestone. We have sold over two billion songs on iTunes. Amazing. We are selling over five million songs a day—that's 58 songs every second of every minute of every hour of every day." Aside from the songs, the iTunes store has also sold 50 million television episodes and over 1.3 million feature-length films. The iTunes Store has an impressive catalog which includes over four million songs, 250 feature films, 350 television shows and over 100,000 podcasts. Jobs also announced a new partnership with Paramount Pictures—now iTunes will also sell more than 100 movies from the studio including "School of Rock," "The Italian Job," "Mean Girls," "Zoolander" and more for \$9.99 each.

iTunes vs Amazon. The top music resellers in the US used to be Walmart, Best Buy, Target, Amazon.com and iTunes Store—in that order. But the sales of the iTunes Store continued to grow, beating Amazon's, making iTunes the fourth biggest music reseller in the US. "You know who our next Target is," Jobs said, as the audience laughed.

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AT CUPERTINO, Apples were everywhere



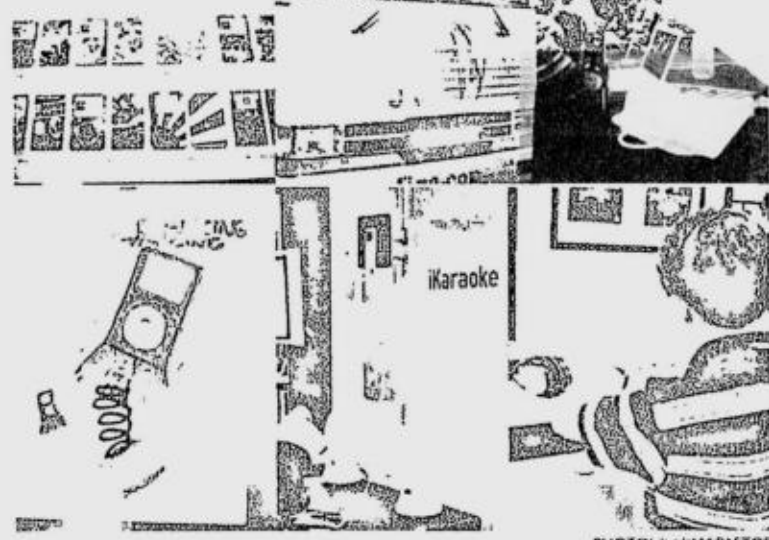
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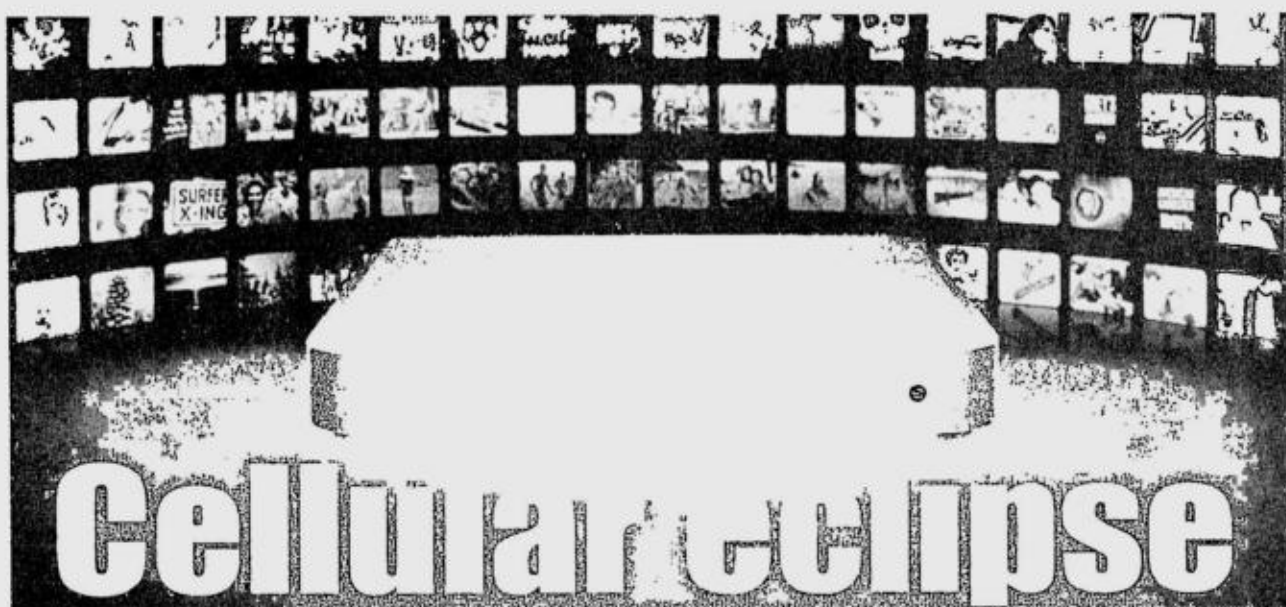


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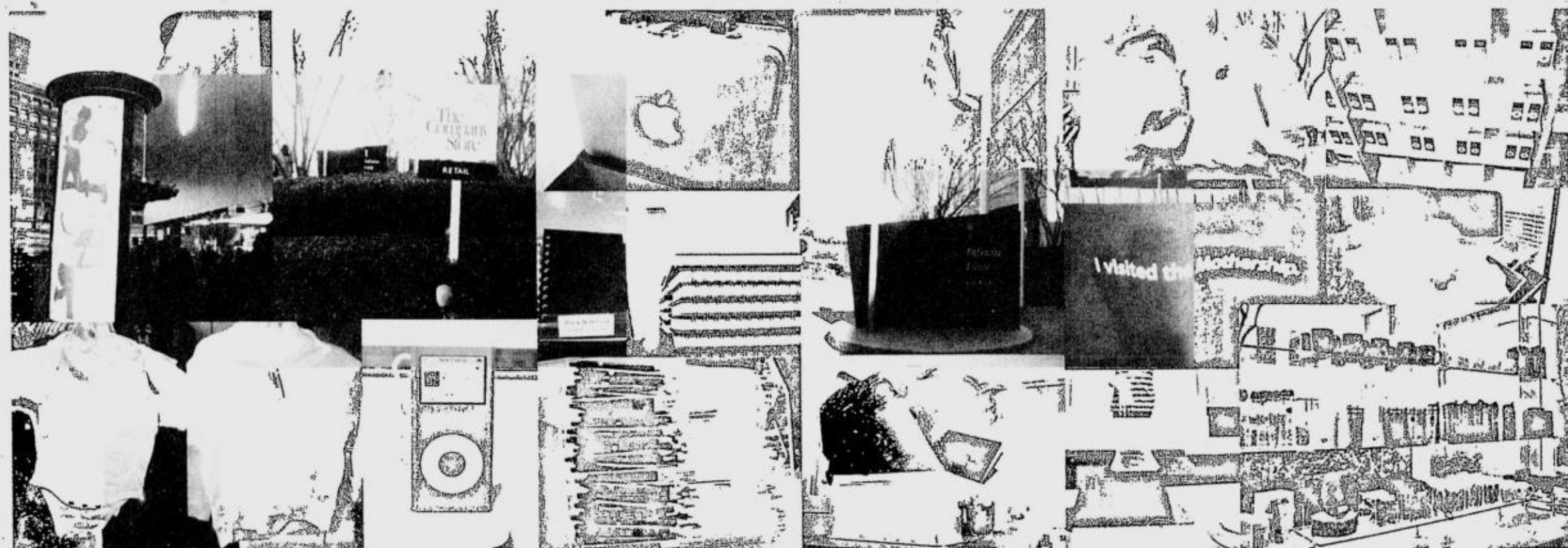
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GARFIELD



BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN



BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES



BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY



BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS



BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS



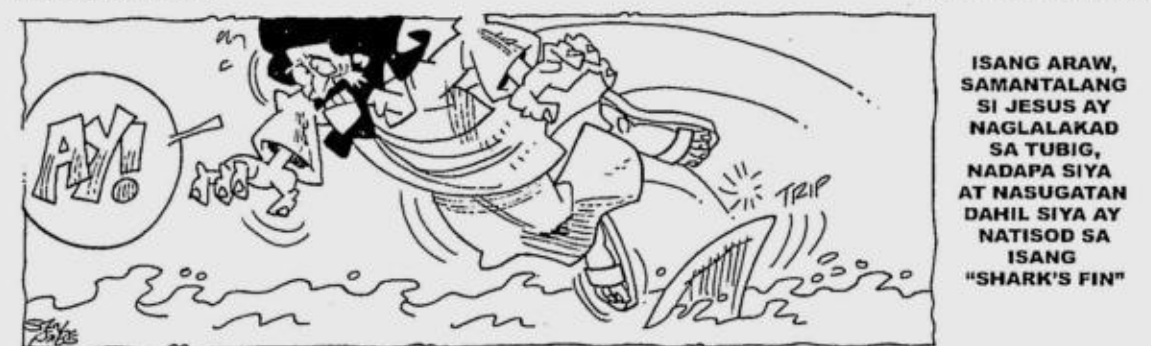
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY



BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE



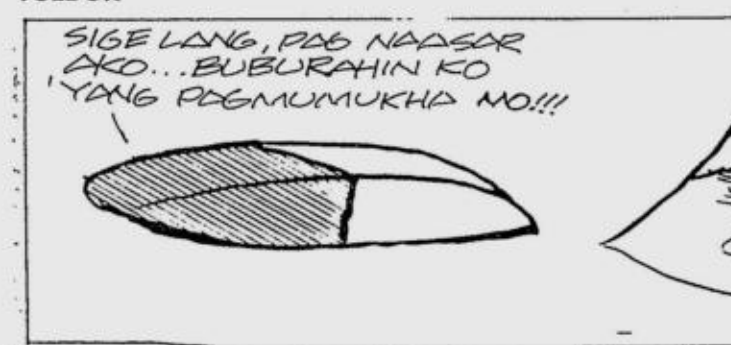
BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS



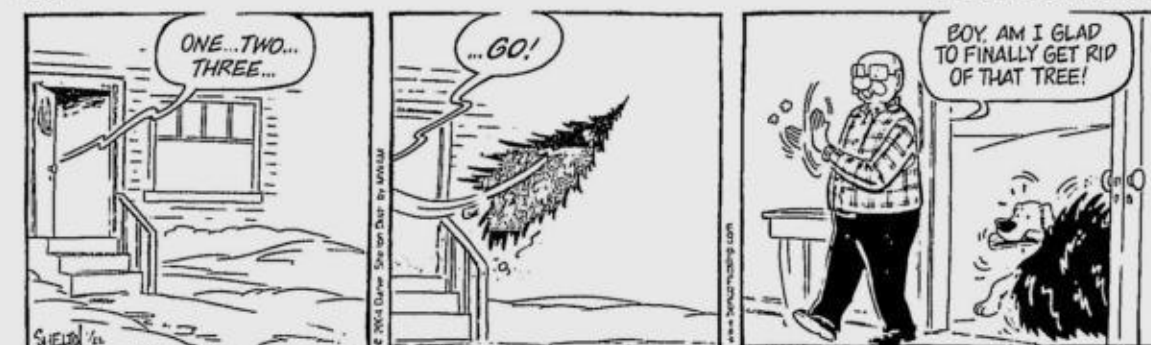
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

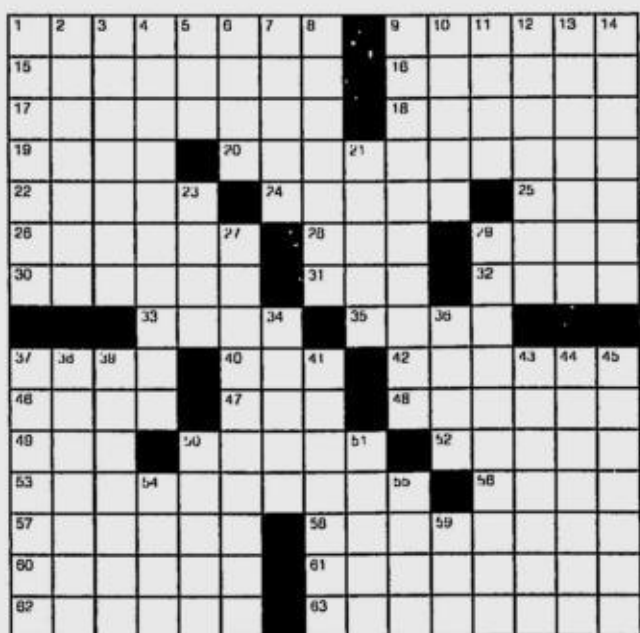
BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Delivered a brief summary of
 - Rascals
 - Cloisonne creator
 - Trying experience
 - Cuban dance in dupe time
 - Mental confusion
 - Poet's black
 - Straying off the subject
 - Habitually
 - Cape on the Atlantic
 - Usher after the intermission
 - Printer's measures
 - Bar of soap
 - Soak
 - Chamomile drink
 - Banned orchard spray
 - Kernel
 - pump
 - Biblical weed
 - Texas tea
 - Tilted
 - Novelist Oz
 - Genetic letters
 - Port on Puget Sound
 - Court divider
 - Rho follower
 - Backless sofa
 - Quadrilaterals with two parallel sides
 - Look after
 - Functioning
 - Imaginary
 - Winding machine
 - Go astray
 - Common vipers
 - Goes by again
- DOWN**
- Listened to again
 - One who makes things possible



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

1/20/07

Friday's Puzzle Solved



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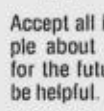
- Train crew's quarters
- Dictation takers
- Livestock enclosure
- Begged
- Unsettling
- Classic TV cop show
- Acrobatic flip
- Earthenware jar
- Throws in
- Insurance coverage
- Easily beaten puglist, slangily
- Long and thin
- Ancient alphabet characters
- Cousin of a minnow
- Those who speculate
- Condensers
- Wild dog of the Outback
- Hoover Dam's lake
- Blast from a trumpet
- Punished with an arbitrary fine
- Spun
- In layers
- Nine-day prayers
- Come forth
- Pampers
- Lop off
- Earthen brick
- Heap
- Dance movement
- Rosemary's Baby author
- Levin

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're generous and big-hearted. People just like you. You're very alive and quick to share your ideas and opinions about anything. You love jokes, and sometimes make fun of yourself; however, you're very serious about what matters to you. You bounce back from adversity more easily than others. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Bill Maher, TV host; Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, astronaut; Skeet Ulrich, actor.



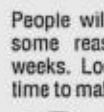
ARIES (March 21 to April 19): In the next two weeks, you will enjoy increased popularity with others.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The Sun is now at high noon in your chart, acting like a spotlight on you.



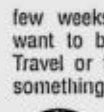
GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're curious about everything. Try to do something different in the next few weeks, because you really want to broaden your horizons. Travel or take a course to learn something new.



CANCER (June 21 to July 22): For the next six weeks, you're on a bit of a self-improvement kick. This is good! It's an excellent time to start a diet or stop a harmful habit.



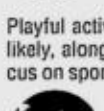
LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today the Sun moves directly opposite your sign, where it will stay for the next four weeks. This is your best chance all year to learn more about yourself through your closest relationships.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You'll notice that you have a growing urge to get more efficient and more organized in everything you do. Give yourself the right tools to do the job properly.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): For the next six weeks, fun, play, parties, the arts and romance will shine!



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Now your attention swings to home, family and real estate matters. Do whatever you can to make your domestic world more comfortable for you and others.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Fasten your seat belt! You're moving into high gear. You've got places to go, people to see, things to do! Get busy.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): In the next six weeks, trust your moneymaking ideas. This is also a good time to think about what it is that you really want in life. What really matters?



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today the Sun moves into your sign, where it will stay for four weeks. It's your turn to re-energize yourself for the rest of the year.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Respect your need for solitude now. You need extra sleep and rest. Stay in the wings.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★★★

1/20

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle



Difficulty Level ★★★★★

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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SNEAK PREVIEWS

Mirren is bound for Oscar glory



By Rito P. Asilo

"The Queen"

D: Stephen Frears

S: Helen Mirren, Michael Sheen

THERE'S GOOD REASON WHY HELEN MIRREN's performance as Queen Elizabeth II in Stephen Frears' brilliant examination of the British monarchy received a five-minute standing ovation when the movie premiered at the Venice Film Festival last year, where it bagged the first in a long list of best-actress accolades for the esteemed thespian.

After winning two best actress trophies at the Golden Globes this week (the other for her similarly riveting turn as Queen Elizabeth I in the made-for-TV movie, "Elizabeth I"), Mirren squares off against the deliciously wicked Meryl Streep ("The Devil Wears Prada")—who won the coveted plum in the Globes' comedy category—at Hollywood's premier awards derby, the Oscars, on Feb. 25.

Alternately hard-hitting, thought-provoking and touching—and boosted by Peter Morgan's kick-ass script—Frears foists the debate over the relevance of the monarchy in the 21st century, and puts the royal family's love-hate relationship with its populace in insightful perspective.

(Interestingly, Morgan also helped co-write Kevin Macdonald's "The Last King of Scotland," starring best-actor frontrunner Forest Whitaker as Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin.)

"The Queen" deftly chronicles how the stubborn Windsors, who had initially refused to join their people in the massive outpouring of grief over the tragic death of Princess Diana in 1997, had to grudgingly acquiesce to the demands of then newly elected Prime Minister Tony Blair (Michael Sheen who, like Mirren, looks eerily like the person he's playing). Blair's rise to power symbolized the 300-year-old conservative Kingdom's changing of the guards.

The film is an acting showcase for Mirren, who makes every scene bristle with subtle intensity—a performance that's hard to beat come Oscar time, with only Streep possibly getting in the way. The actress successfully limns the Queen's complex emotional journey—and puts a private face on a stoic public figure.

When the public anger becomes scurrilous, you actually see the stiff upper lip start to tremble as she tries to make sense of the delicate situation:

Looking genuinely confounded by the uproar over her perceived insensitivity, she later tells Blair, "I have always preferred to keep my feelings to myself—I have been raised that way...I've never been hated like that before."

The Queen should thank her lucky stars for subjects like Mirren, who show that there is, after all, a heart inside the seemingly stone-cold House of Windsor!

"Apocalypto"

D: Mel Gibson

S: Rudy Youngblood, Raoul Trujillo

As far as cinematic violence is concerned, Mel Gibson really pulls no punches. The troubled actor-director's follow-up to his blood-soaked 2004 box-office champion, "The Passion of the Christ," is an engaging action-drama about invasion and vengeance set in 16th century Mayan civilization:

When ruthless marauders invade Jaguar Paw's (Rudy Youngblood) idyllic community, he must conquer his fear, escape his tormentors, save his family—and preserve an ideal albeit indigenous way of life on the verge of collapse.

Gibson's unerring ability to entertain and tell a tale devoid of narrative frills and artistic pretension is obvious—a quality that was already on display in his 1993 directorial debut, "Man Without a Face," and, more overtly, in 1995's "Braveheart."

His productions favor a relentlessly graphic visual style over dialogue-driven exposition to weave stories fraught with near-gratuitous violence—which necessitate the casting of actors who physically embody his tortured heroes (Jim Caviezel in "Passion" and the commanding Youngblood in this film).

Say what you will about Gibson's "crude" filmmaking aesthetics, but when you watch his movies, it's hard to take your eyes away from the screen when Gibson wants to drive a point, because he delivers his message clearly, and goes straight for the jugular—literally!



YOUNGBLOOD. Commanding presence.

MIRREN. Reveals the private face of a stoic public figure.

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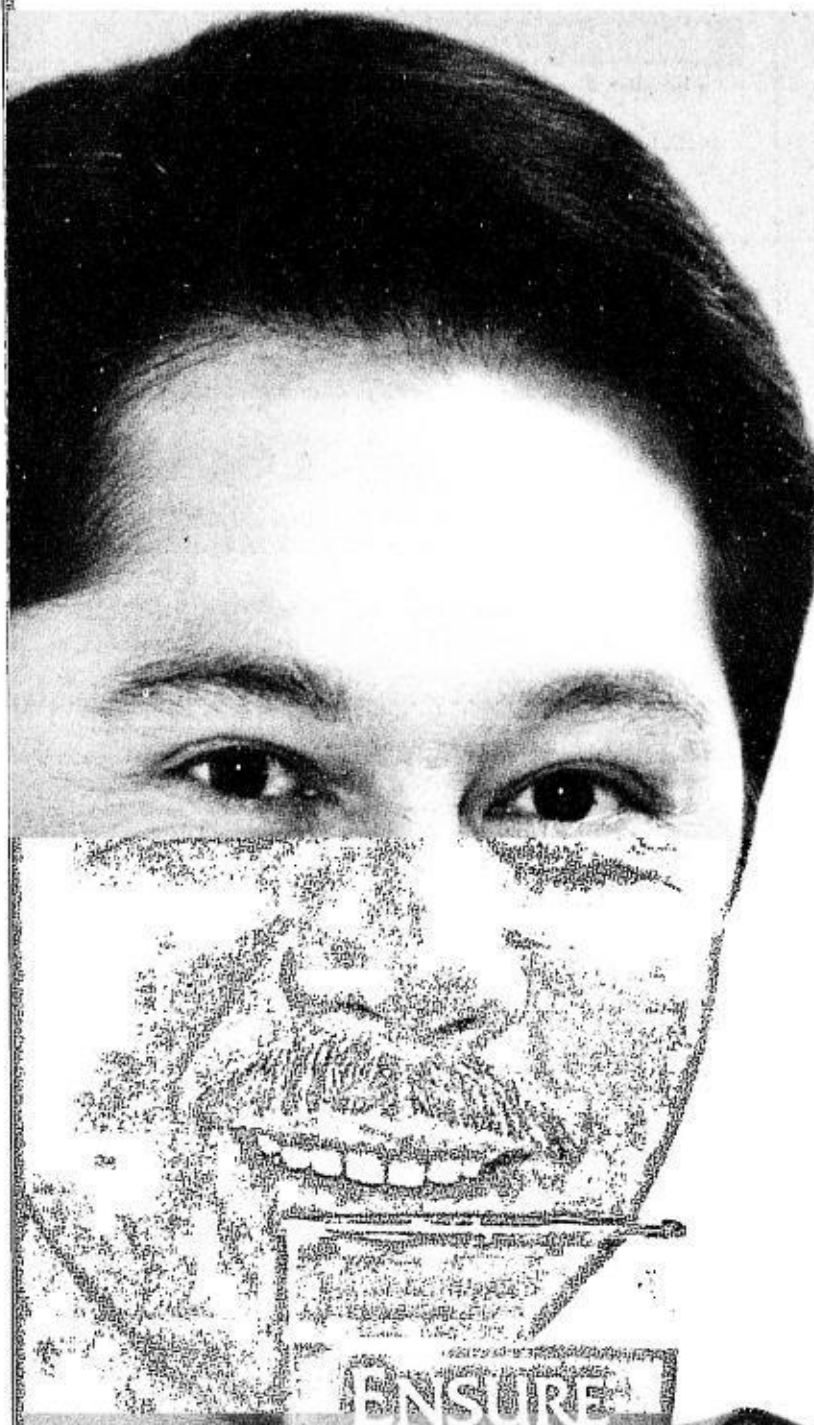
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"Keeping my heart healthy is a top priority, especially now that I'm getting a little older."

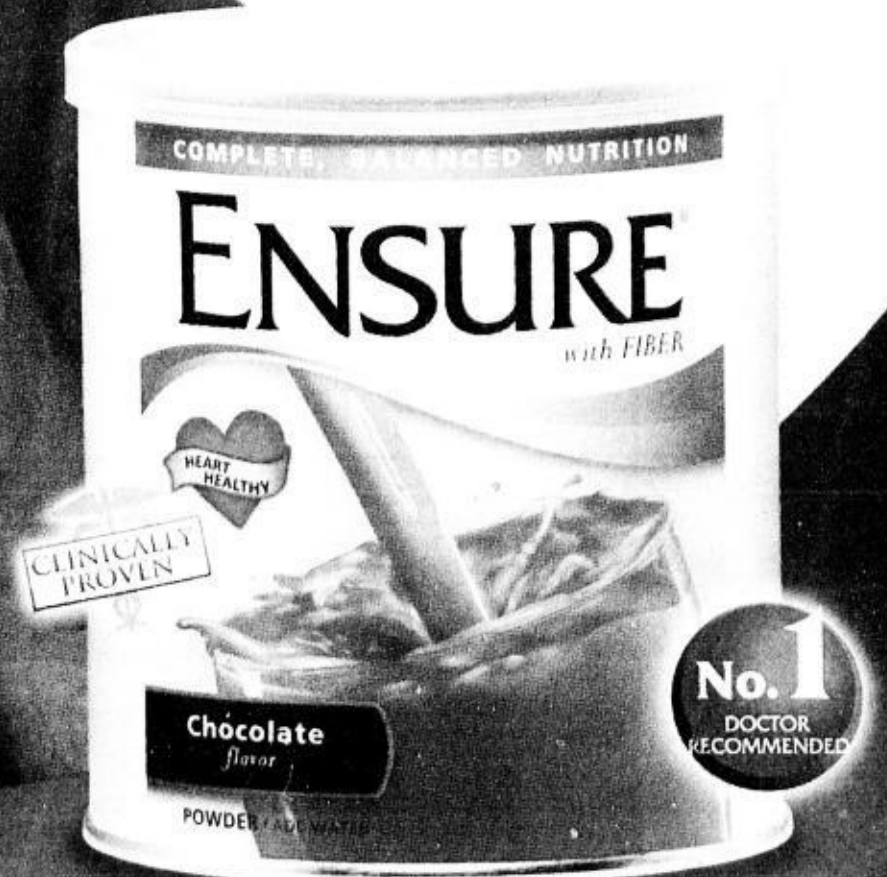
That's why I exercise, eat right, and drink doctor-recommended ENSURE everyday. It has a unique Heart Defense System to help prevent cholesterol build-up and control blood pressure. It's also rich in fiber and antioxidants to help keep my heart protected.



ENSURE meets the standards of the American Heart Association and the National Cholesterol Education Program.*

You, too, can have a healthy heart with ENSURE, the number one doctor-recommended adult nutritional drink for men and women worldwide!

Christopher de Leon
Multi-awarded Actor,
Devoted Family Man



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RED CARPET PREMIERE

TODAY at 7:30 p.m.
SM City Manila Cinema 6

OPENS JANUARY 24
at SM Cinema and in IMAX 2D at
San Miguel Coca-Cola IMAX Theater

MTRCB Rating: G

METRO MANILA		
SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104 IMAX T-REX IN 3D Admission Fee- P200 10:30AM 11:45AM 1:30PM 2:15PM 3:30PM 4:45PM 7:15PM HAPPY FEET IN 2D Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250 SANTA VS THE SNOWMAN 6:00PM Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250 DEJA VU BLOOD DIAMOND ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES ROB-B-HOOD KASAL, KASALI, KASALO AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH PREMIERE CINEMA AGENT X44 CENTERSTAGE ERAGON PODIUM CINEMA 1 ERAGON CINEMA 2 DEJA VU 633-8976	SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901 1. ENTENG KABISOTE 3 2. BLOOD DIAMOND 3. KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 4. DEJA VU 5. AGENT X44 6. ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES 7. MATAKOT KA SA KARMA 8. ROB-B-HOOD 9. AGENT X44 10. ERAGON 11. SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8 12. GRIFFIN & PHOENIX SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749 1. ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES 2. MANO PO 5 3. AGENT X44 4. BLOOD DIAMOND 5. ROB-B-HOOD 6. KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 7. DEJA VU 8. ERAGON 9. AGENT X44 10. SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8 11. ENTENG KABISOTE 3 12. GRIFFIN & PHOENIX SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416 1. DEJA VU 2. ROB-B-HOOD 3. ERAGON 4. KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 5. AGENT X44 6. GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 7. ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES 8. ENTENG KABISOTE 3 9. BLOOD DIAMOND 10. SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8 SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488 1. ERAGON 2. DEJA VU 3. ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES 4. ROB-B-HOOD 5. KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 6. AGENT X44	SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888 DEJA VU ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES AGENT X44 AGENT X44 ERAGON KASAL, KASALI, KASALO BLOOD DIAMOND ROB-B-HOOD ENTENG KABISOTE 3 SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055 DEJA VU AGENT X44 ROB-B-HOOD ERAGON BLOOD DIAMOND KASAL, KASALI, KASALO ROB-B-HOOD ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES DEJA VU ENTENG KABISOTE 3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA AGENT X44 SM CITY MANILA 523-9240 ERAGON BLOOD DIAMOND KASAL, KASALI, KASALO ROB-B-HOOD ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES DEJA VU ENTENG KABISOTE 3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA AGENT X44 SM CITY DASHMARINAS (045) 833221-04 DEJA VU KASAL, KASALI, KASALO AGENT X44 BLOOD DIAMOND SM VALENZUELA 293-3917 DEJA VU ERAGON AGENT X44 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO SM CITY SUGAT 829-4975 DEJA VU AGENT X44 ERAGON KASAL, KASALI, KASALO



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GALLERIA

1 ERAGON • THX
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

6 SAW 3
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30

2 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 indieSine's Digital Cinema
Bagong Agos Film Festival

8 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

5 DEJA VU
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA

1 DEJA VU

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2 ROB-B-HOOD
BLOOD DIAMOND 4:40 7:20 10:00

5 AGENT X44
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3 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
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METRO EAST

1 ROB-B-HOOD
1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

5 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:10 3:00 5:55 9:00

2 AGENT X44
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4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

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1 DEJA VU

4 SAW 3

2 ERAGON

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3 AGENT X44

6 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 DEJA VU

3 AGENT X44

2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

4 SAW 3
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

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Set in the middle of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they tumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Purdie (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connelly), is the family headbanger. When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to fantasize a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGonvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their irresponsible actions. It's a bittersweet, funny, and nakedly honest, critique of middle class dysfunction.

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3 GOLDEN GLOBE
BEST ACTRESS BEST SCREENPLAY

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FILM CRITICS CIRCLE
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTRESS BEST SCREENPLAY

Little Children
Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson

STA. ROSA

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 SAW 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 AGENT X44

LIPA

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X44
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 DEJA VU

DASHMARINAS

1 DEJA VU
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SAW 3
4 AGENT X44

ANGELES

1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SAW 3

IMUS

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SAW 3
3 ERAGON
4 DEJA VU
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 AGENT X44

STARMILLS

1 DEJA VU
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 AGENT X44
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 SAW 3
6 ERAGON

BACOLOD

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IMUS

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6 AGENT X44

STARMILLS

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4 DEJA VU
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GARCIA. Award-winning performance.

ICU at IndieSine

LOCAL FILM BUFFS will get a chance to watch Rica Arevalo's "ICU Bed #7" from Jan. 31 to Feb. 6 at Robinson's Galleria's IndieSine. It stars Eddie Garcia in the lead role of Lolo Joseph, the stubborn patriarch whose illness forces his daughters (Irma Adlawan and Angel Aquino) to make a life-changing decision.

Garcia's performance in the searing drama earned him a best actor trophy at the first Cinemalaya film festival.

Providing support are seasoned actors like Noni Buenacaminio, Rito Asilo, Andy Bais, Reema Chanco, Happee Sy and Arvin Viola.

Week-long run
Based on Arevalo's Palanca award-winning screenplay, the 100-minute digital indie, produced by Mediarevolution in cooperation with the Indie Filmmakers Co-operative, will have a week-long run at Robinson's newly launched IndieSine. Accolades reaped by the film include best direction (Arevalo) and best actor (Garcia) at the 2005 Cinemalaya competition, as well as nominations from the 2006 Star Awards for best digital film, director and actor. It was likewise graded B by the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB).

Botched transition

By Noelani Torre

THERE'S A TRU-ism that gets drummed into most writers and storytellers early on in their careers: There are no new plots. Luckily, however, there are innumerable ways of telling a story.

Influence
In author Christopher Paolini's fantasy series, the influence of Tolkien, Anne McCaffrey, Wagner, and Star Wars are obvious. "Eragon" may be too derivative and occasionally sophomoric, but it is nonetheless a good yarn. Unfortunately, it's the more negative aspects of Paolini's material that have survived the transition from page to screen. In the movie version, the faults are highlighted.

BOTCHED/D3



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New hits from 'old' scripts

By Nestor U. Torre

IT'S OFFICIAL: "KASAL, KASALI, Kasalo" is the recent Metro film fest's top grosser, earning something like P139 million during its festival run.

It's both interesting and instructive to recall that the original script of "Kasal" was purchased by Star Cinema a full decade ago! It was written by Mary Ann Bautista, and had won second place in the Film Development Foundation's national screenwriting competition.

Persuasive

We can still remember the awards night when then Foundation executive, Marichu Vera Perez-Maceda, went up to Star Cinema's Malou Santos and, in her uniquely persuasive fashion, brokered the prize-winning script's sale to the leading film studio.

Why did it take 10 years for the script to finally reach the big screen? For sure, if the Star Cinema people had known that it would be such a popular project, they

would have shot it right away! But, that's the way it is in the movies, where factors like stars' schedules and "right timing" affect when promising projects are finally put into production.

Then, too, there are the many script changes that eventuate, affecting a project sometimes positively, but at other time also negatively.

Whatever the delays, changes and hesitations, however, "Kasal's" exceptional box-office success after years and years in the freezer has made some producers take a good second look at the other promising, but still unproduced scripts gathering dust and cobwebs on their own shelves.

Who knows? Some of them could also make mega-millions for the production studios that have yet to turn them into finished films!

For instance, still at Star Cinema,



TINIO. Unproduced work is a gem.

there's an action-legal-drama screenplay titled, "Sentensya," that could also click with film fans. Its title role would make a great acting vehicle for the likes of Johnny Delgado, Noni Buencamino, Ronaldo Valdez, Cesar Montano or Christopher de Leon.

Also an exceptional project that should see the light of film is a screenplay set in lahar-drowned Pampanga.

Merits

When we judged the writing contest where it was one of the entries, we fell in love with the powerful and moving screenplay and tried to convince the other jurors about its merits.

Alas, they didn't react positively to it,

and the script lost out. Only later did we find out who wrote it: The Rolando Tinio! We rest our case.

Paz Santillan has written a gripping account of a woman who is compelled to care for her mentally-challenged brother. This would be a great acting piece for the likes of Sharon Cuneta and Piolo Pascual.

Acting showcases

Ray Manalo has penned "Ina Ka ng Anak Mo," a film about all sorts of mothers that Star Cinema or Unilever should snap up. It offers fine acting showcases for 10 exceptional actresses.

There are many more fine scripts among the Film Development Foundation's (now Council's) annual screenwriting contest finalists that producers should look into. They won't be sorry—and the viewing public will be grateful!

Botched transition

From page D2

The movie opens with a narration (courtesy of Jeremy Irons), introducing us to the world of Eragon, where dragon riders once kept the peace of the prosperous land.

Then, one of the riders (John Malkovich) became too ambitious. In his quest for power he killed all the other dragon riders and their mighty beasts, until no one was left to oppose him, except for a band of rebels hiding out in the mountains.

Cut to scene where an elf princess (Sienna Guillory) with a blue gem is being

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AGENT X44 PG13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES G 1:25, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:25	ERAGON G 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:25, 4:25, 7:25, 10:25	ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:50, 3:20, 5:50 SAW III R18 8:20, 10:30	DEJA VU PG13 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30

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IN THEATERS JANUARY 31

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MTRCB PG-13

DEJAVU

Denzel Washington

Dejavu is thought to be a trick of the mind... but what if it's not?

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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Center Mall Cinema Baguio Center Mall, Maguway Avenue (Baguio City) tel: (074) 4449346 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU	Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel: (045) 887-5001 to 03 1 DEJA VU 2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA) 3 SAW 4 ERAGON
CINEMA 2000 Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati Waltermart Center, Chino Rocas Ave. cor. Antena Annex Pasig del Pilar, Makati City Tel: 816-4224 / 816-4216 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU 3 AGENT X 44 4 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES	Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel: (047) 237-7907 1 MANO PO-5 2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
starmall (Mandaluyong) tel: 7258150 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 RESERVED	CINEMA 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millennium Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Cebu) tel: (049) 545-7383 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU 3 AGENT X 44
metropolis star www.cinecity.com.ph (ALABANG) tel: 8504285, 5433994 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ERAGON 4 SAW	CINEMA 2000 Pavilion Mall (Bulacan) tel: (049) 4111146 1 RESERVED 2 RESERVED 3 RESERVED 4 RESERVED
PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC Pacific Mall Laguna tel: (042) 660-3271 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 RESERVED 4 RESERVED	Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel: (075) 568-6771 1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 2 AGENT X 44 3 DEJA VU
Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel: 850-3571 or 72 1 SAW 2 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES 3 DEJA VU 4 ERAGON	Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tayuk) tel: (045) 982-1729 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO AGENT X 44 DEJA VU ERAGON
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Blue Wave Serving Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Rosa, Marikina City tel: 8241927 1 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES 2 AGENT X 44 3 DEJA VU 4 RESERVED	Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel: 840-4748 1 KASAL KASALI KASALO 2 ENTENG KASISOTE-3
Blue Wave Serving Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Rosa, Marikina City tel: 8241927 1 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES 2 AGENT X 44 3 DEJA VU 4 RESERVED	Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel: 850-1276 1 BLOOD DIAMOND 2 PURI 3 SABIK SA HALIK 4 SHADLIN VS' EVIL DEAD
MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel: 533-3851 / 533-3856 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ROB-B-HOOD 4 RESERVED	Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel: (049) 545-7202 1 DEJA VU 2 BARASAGIN CRYSTAL 3 ROB-B-HOOD 4 AGENT X 44 5 ERAGON
MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel: 533-3851 / 533-3856 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ROB-B-HOOD 4 RESERVED	Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel: (043) 981-0790 1 BLOOD DIAMOND 2 ERAGON 3 AGENT X 44 4 DEJA VU
MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel: 533-3851 / 533-3856 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ROB-B-HOOD 4 RESERVED	Berma Cinema (Baclarlan) tel: 879-2930 / 879-2929 1 ARTHUR & INVISIBLE 2 ROB-B-HOOD

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Temptation
Perversion
Deception

Little Children

Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson

OPENS JAN. 24

A tale of two Josés

By Rito P. Asilo

WHEN JOSÉ ESTRELLA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR of Dulaang UP, asked us to play José Rizal in the UP Playwright Theater's *sarswela*, "Basilia ng Malolos," we welcomed the chance to revisit a character we had played twice when we were just starting out in the theater—in Musical Theater Philippines' "Sino Ka Ba, José Rizal?" and Bayanihan's "Sa Ibayong Dagat," both under NUT's direction.

Fond memories

We have fond memories of those two musical productions—from learning the complicated, atonal melodies of National Artist for Music Lucrecia Kasilag to watching National Artist for Dance Lucrecia Urtula in fevered action.

We welcome our occasional forays into the classics with José, who last directed us in DUP's staging of Federico Garcia Lorca's "The Butterfly's Evil Spell." It was also Estrella who inspired NVC to stage Sophocles' "Antigone" and Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot."

Now, with more experience and maturity, we see the offer as an opportunity to explore the man behind the enigmatic hero who had inspired a Revolution that changed the course of our country's history.

After our stint as director of the various incarnations of New Voice's groundbreaking feminist play, "The Vagina Monologues," we see "Basilia ng Malolos," with José at the helm, as an eventful theatrical paradox in the country's male character-dominated historical productions:

20 women

Playwright Nicanor Tiongson's *sarswela* (with music by Joy Marfil and movement by Dexter Santos) is inspired by the story of the 20 women (led by Basilia Tantoco, played by Jenny Jamora) of Malolos, Bulacan, who, on Dec. 12, 1888, presented Governor-General Valeriano Weyler with a letter asking permission to open a night school where women could learn Spanish—a move that drew strong objections from Fr. Felipe Garcia. But, the defiant *Bulakeñas* fought on and soon won



their cause. The incident inspired Rizal to write his famous letter "To the Women of Malolos." Who says feminism is just a late 20th-century concept?

Joining Jamora in the cast are Dr. Belen Calingacion, Neil Ryan Sese, Felix Rivera, Lex Marcos, Nikki Ventosa, Diana Alferez, Beaver Flores, Natasia Garrucha, Judith Javier, Chinchin Fernando and Adel de Monteverde.

"Basilia ng Malolos" runs at the Guerrero Theater in UP Diliman from Feb. 14 to March 4, Wednesdays to Sundays. Call Joanne Quiros at 926-1349 or 0927 827-4610.



JAMORA. Plays revolutionary feminist.

Botched transition

From page E3

chased by a dark sorcerer (Robert Carlyle).

The next scene shows a farm where a blond boy lives. He is obviously destined for greater things, and his name is Eragon (Ed Speleers).

By this time, similarities to "Star Wars" are so glaring that you'll find yourself keeping an eye out for the appearance of Obi-wan Kenobi, who does appear—in the form of Brom (Irons), a strange recluse who turns out to be a former dragon rider who had escaped the scourge.

Special effects

Director Stefan Fangmeier, though a whiz with special effects, just doesn't know how to tell a story—both visually and verbally.

Though relatively short, the movie feels long. The atmosphere is sometimes too Wagnerian for words. A welcome highlight, however, is the dragon (voiced by Rachel Weisz)—though even she looks like she would rather be in "Dragonheart."

SARI-SARI, SUNOD-SUNOD, MASARAP MANOOD!

SABADO

Wowowee • 12:30pm
Aapaw ang saya at papremyo sa nag-iisang tahanan ng bawat Pilipino!
Bibisita pa sina ANGELIKA DELA CRUZ, JOYCE JIMENEZ, RACHELLE ANN GO at PAROKYA NI EDGAR.

Nagmamahal Kapamilya • 3pm
Ang dating malamig na pagsasama, magiging mainit sa reunion ng MAGPANTAY FAMILY after 33 years.

Let's Go • 4pm
Chill na with the Go-Kada kasama pa ang PBB Teen housemate na si JAMILLA!

Star Magic Presents Abt Ur Luv • 5pm
Maging frozen kaya ang pakikitungo ni Celine (DENISE LAUREL) kay Neri (SHAINA MAGDAYAO) sa pagkikita nilang dalawa?

TV Patrol Sabado • 6pm
Maraming balita ang dito mo lang mababaitaan!

Komiks Presents Da Adventures of Pedro Penduko
Malusaw kaya si Pedro (MATT EVANS) sa water power ng BERBEROKA?

John En Shirley
Si JOYCE JIMENEZ, matutunaw sa lakas ng karisma ni Mang John (DOLPHY).

XXX Eksklusibong Explosibong Exposé
Manginginig sa kaba ang mga taong gumagawa ng kalokohan! Sundan ang 2nd part ng text network scandal.

Aalog-Alog • 9:30pm
Si Lloyd (LONG MEJIA), nagtayo ng pasugalan sa Barangay Taniman!
To the rescue ang vanilla-colored coat ni Agent X45 (FRANZEN FAJARDO).

Sana Maulit Muli (2-Week Marathon)
Maulit muli ang panahon para mabigyan ka ng pagkakataong masakihan ang kilig story nina Jasmine (KIM CHIU) at Travis (GERALD ANDERSON).

Sports Unlimited
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ASAP '07 • 11:45 am
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Alamin ang mga latest showbiz scoops!

TV Patrol Linggo • 6pm

Goin' Bulilit
Maki-join sa ligaya ng tawanan at kainan sa birthday party ng Goin' Bulilit gang.

Rated K: Handa Na Ba Kayo?
Lights, camera, action!
Namnamin ang mga kwentong kakaiba, hatid sa iyo ni KORINA.

Sharon
Mangingilo ang ngipin mo sa taray comments ng mga babaeng palaban!

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Sino ang tatamaan ng sinag ng araw? Alamin ang mga mananalo ng Araw Awards!

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- Pilipinas, Game K N B?
- Wowowee
- Kapamilya Cinema

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Martes- Sige, Subukan Mo
Miyerkules- Ronquillo, Tubong Cavite, Laking Tondo
Huwebes- Sam & Miguel (Your Basura, No Problema)
Biyernes- Blusang Itim

• Inocente De Ti
Lasapin ang sarap ng pagmamahalan nila Florecita at Julio Albertol

Pangako Sa 'Yo • 6pm
Mala-cookies and cream ang kumbinasayong Claudia (JEAN GARCIA) at Amor (EULA VALDES) para paghiwalayin sina Angelo (JERICHO ROSALES) at Yna (KRISTINE HERMOSA).

TV Patrol World
Ang kabalitaan ng mas maraming Pilipino, saan man sa mundo!

Kapamilya Deal or No Deal P4 Million Edition
Ma-select na kaya ang 4-million peso briefcase?

Super Inggo
Giginawin sa nerbiyos si Budong (MAKISIG MORALES) kapag nalaman niyang si Bugan (AIAI DELAS ALAS) ang real mommy niya.

Sana Maulit Muli
Kasing tamis ng strawberry ice cream ang pagmamahalan nina Jasmine (KIM CHIU) at Travis (GERALD ANDERSON). But what if mahadlangan ito ng panahon? Muli kayang mauulit ang pagkakataon?

Maging Sino Ka Man
Ang pag-iibigan nina Jackie (BEA ALONZO) at Eli (JOHN LLOYD CRUZ), dadaan sa rocky road!

Princess Hours
Mag-melt na kaya si Prince Gian sa pag-ibig na dala ni Princess Janelle?

Maalaala Mo Kaya
Tuwing Biyernes
Isang special story na may kurot sa puso ang iyong matutunghayan
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Noypi, Ikaw Ba 'To?
Tuwing Lunes
Konservatibo pa ba ang mga Pinoy?
Hosted by: GABE MERCADO

The Correspondents
Tuwing Martes
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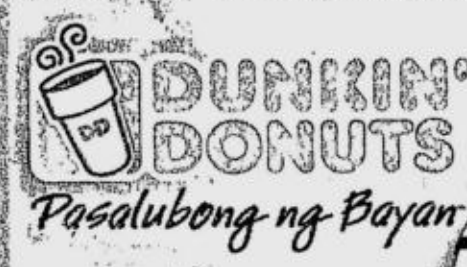
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'AMERICAN IDOL 6' IN MINNEAPOLIS

Out of 10,000 auditionees, only 17 pass muster

By Nestor U. Torre

THE SIXTH SEASON OF "AMERICAN IDOL" was launched last Jan. 17 on ABC-5. We dutifully watched the show, but realized that our heart wasn't really in it. This was a surprise, because we had enjoyed the talent search's previous editions. What had happened?

After mulling the situation over, we concluded that "American Idol" had lost some of its allure and excitement for us because its local edition, "Philippine Idol," had been so disappointing. It was messy, not all that well-produced, some outstanding bets were voted out, and the finale felt anticlimactic.

Disappointment

All that was true, at least as far as we were concerned. But, was it fair to take our disappointment out on the new season of "American Idol?" Of course not.

So, we told ourselves to shape up, stop acting like a brat, restore our sense of objectivity, and evaluate "American Idol 6" on its own terms. Properly chastened and refocused, these are our initial observations:

The Jan. 17 show is initially a turn-off because it focuses so much on the freaks and absolute no-talents who audition—with zero chances of making it.

The "freak factor" attracts all sorts of dingbats who crawl out from under a rock or out of the woodwork just to have their 15 seconds of "fame" on global television.

If the focus is so freaky, why does "American Idol" lay it on so thick? Because, quite perversely, viewers love it. —Oh, wow.

Positive aspects

After getting over that low blow, we concentrate on the initial show's more positive aspects. Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul, Randy Jackson and guest judge Jewel first fly into Minneapolis, where 10,000 hopefuls have lined up to audition. Most of the auditionees are piss-awful, and this brings out the worst in the jurors.

In fact, Randy gets even nastier than the snide, sarcastic Simon! At one point, he lashes out at a voice teacher who can't sing so viciously that even Simon is shocked (or pretends to be).

Later, after he calms down, Randy shares that he has opted to be more "honest" in his

comments because "the truth will set you free."

And what is the truth in this instance? That the auditionee can't and shouldn't sing—so, if a judge tells it like it is, he'll be "freed" from his self-delusion, choose a vocation or profession he's better at, and move on! —Well, if you say so.

At the end of the very long and dire audition process in Minneapolis, the 10,000 auditions produced—only 17 fair to great singers who would then be flown to Hollywood for the tilt's second and tougher round.

Patriotic back story

Among the survivors were some great lookers with good voices, plus a female military reservist whose husband was fighting in Iraq. She wasn't that great a singer, but her patriotic back story must have strummed some chords in the jurors, because they reserved a slot for her.

Come to think of it, a second person in military uniform also made the cut. Hey, will this year's show be retitled "American Patriot?"

Well, the two military "representatives" were fairly good singers, so no harm done. But this latest development calls to mind the



FANTASIA BARRINO AND TAYLOR HICKS. Who will join their exclusive club as this year's top winner?

2006 film, "American Dreamz," that spoofed "American Idol": It too had a "patriotic" factor going for it—plus a terrorist, to boot. Is it

possible that...?

—Nah, the real "Idol" wouldn't go that far to be topical!

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Sci-fi aspect weakens 'Déjà Vu'

By Noelani Torre

"DÉJÀ VU," TONY SCOTT'S LATEST MOVIE, begins with a bang. Of course, booms and bangs are nothing out of the ordinary from the guy who gave us "Top Gun" and "Enemy of the State," but the blowing up of a ferry that kicks off this action suspense flick is dramatic enough to be memorable.

Aside from impressive explosions, the film has other things working for it—among these are the presence of producer Jerry Bruckheimer and the star power of Denzel Washington.

Bruckheimer, well-known for his sleek and speedy films ("Con Air," "Armageddon"), brings his sure touch to the project.

Washington, though not at his most brilliant here, gives a grounded and credible performance as a government agent who has to—what else?—save people's lives.

Washington is Doug Carlin, an experienced agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

He is part of a team that has to catch the terrorist who blew up a entire ferry-load of US Navy sailors and their families in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Tricks

Put like that, the story sounds like your usual chase-the-baddies-and-save-the-world thriller, but "Déjà Vu" has a few tricks up its sleeve, plot-wise.

The title is French, for one, which could indicate that this movie might be more complicated. There's also a beautiful woman who is, unfortunately, dead. She (Paula Patton) appears to have died in the explosion—but then, they find out that she was found two hours before the ferry blew up!



WASHINGTON AND KILMER. Team up to solve a baffling crime:

Carlin is hooked. Solve who killed her, he proposes, and we'll know who blew up the ferry. He is then recruited by FBI agent Pryzwara (Val Kilmer), who introduces him to very high-tech satellite technology that ostensibly allows the government to snoop into people's homes.

They are able to see, in real time, events that happened four days before the blast! There's no fast-forward and no rewind.

Carlin is suspicious and, to cut a long story short, he finds out that this new technology is actually a bridge from the present to the past. The scientists talk about Einstein space, wormholes and string theory, but they

mostly sound like gobbledygook.

In the end, what Carlin wants to know is if he can change the past—to stop the explosion that killed the woman he's fallen in love with.

No sense of wonder

The film then ventures into the realm of science fiction—and this is where it stumbles. It asks you to suspend disbelief. But, there's no sense of wonder in the revelations and thus, it feels like a stretch. What should have been the "ah" of discovery turns into the "oh" of doubt.

However, the action moves forward at a fast enough clip, so you don't feel let-down for long.

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For this year's safari, three trips are scheduled: From April 3 to 7, from 14 to 17, and then from 27 to 30 (in cooperation with Asian Spirit and Batanes Seaside Lodging and Restaurant).

Thoughts

Here are thoughts and recollections from our students: Bernarte shares, "The photo safari took us to the heart of Batanes' quaint villages."

Atty. Noel Liok: "The beauty of the magnificent sea resonated in me!"

Roxane Matsuda sums it up best: "I thought I had already seen the best places in the country—until I saw Batanes."

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Controversial festival helps pull the plug

By Mark Meily

EDU MANZANO'S CLOSING REMARKS as host of the recent Metro Manila Film Festival proclaimed that Philippine Cinema is now ready for the world. When eyebrows were raised wondering why "Enteng Kabisote" won Best Picture, Manzano explained that one criterion was "commercial viability," which accounts for 40 percent of the total score. With this year's MMFF Best Picture standard, are we really ready for the world?

Let's backtrack a few decades and recall the MMFF's *raison d'être*. The late Manila Mayor Antonio Villegas set up the Manila Film Festival to showcase the best of Philippine cinema.

Even bigger

It was made even bigger when in 1975 it changed its name to the Metro Manila Film Festival and opened on Dec. 25 and ran until the New Year. By law, only Filipino films are allowed to be

screened during this festival.

Through the years, the festival introduced great classics like "Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon," "Himala," "Kisapmata," "Bulaklak ng City Jail," "Karnal," "Jose Rizal," et al., to Filipinos and, eventually—to the world.

In 2003, my first feature, "Crying Ladies" won Best Film in that year's MMFF. The judges then included some of the "Who's Who" in the field of cinema and the academe. It was a competitive year. Jeffrey Jeturian's "Bridal Shower" and Joel Lamangan's "Filipinas" were equally good films.

Standards

The standards were high and I'm proud that we worked hard to reach those standards. As a result of that Best Picture award, "Crying Ladies" was our country's representative to the 2005 Oscars (for Best Foreign Film).

Sadly, if we were to enter "Crying Ladies" in the recent MMFF, we would probably win nothing. I won-

der which film will represent the Philippines in the next Oscars. This year's MMFF Best Picture, perhaps? "Enteng Kabisote" has already reaped its reward as a commercial film. It does not need another honor—it's like giving an award to Microsoft's Bill Gates for being the richest man again this year.

Rules

If you look at all other film festivals' rules for choosing the Best Film, you will never see a criterion called Commercial Viability (add Global Appeal to that).

It gets even more bizarre when the MMDA defends the criteria by saying that this film festival is for commercial movies, and if the filmmakers want to make art films they should enter their productions in festivals abroad.

Abroad? Why, then, does the MMFF still aspire for the world? Are they dreaming of the Philip-

pines being the next Korea in world cinema? Korean cinema grew because it made good films, not because it made commercial flicks.

Again, MMFF organizers will say that the criteria for Best Film are stated in the MMFF Guidelines. However, when a producer applies to the MMFF, all that he or she dreams is to be considered for the list. It is difficult enough to be considered—what more if they question the fine-print rules in the guidelines?

A veteran master director once told me that the MMFF is a festival run by politicians. According to him, we filmmakers should learn to accept this and keep our hopes low if we join.

Point

What then is the point of having awards? Let us not strive any more to make good films. Ironically, the Cinema Evalua-

tion Board (CEB), the government agency that encourages filmmakers to make better films by giving tax incentives to high-graded films, becomes inutile during Metro Manila Festival. "A"-graded films still need to pay the amusement tax in full.

Each MMFF ends with its share of controversies and predictions of the film industry's demise. After the latest brouhaha, however, we can be more accurate in determining when Philippine Cinema will die. The MMFF has already helped pull the plug.



MEILY. His "Crying Ladies" won top festival honors in 2003.

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MICHAEL LEWITT & GARY MITCHELL MICHAEL LEWITT MICHAEL LEWITT MICHAEL LEWITT

glorietta	GREENBELT	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!	Ayala Malls
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AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 3333 (Globe) or 311 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations. Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 1777.

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	6 ERAGON	7 SAW 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 INNOCENT VOICES GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SAW 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	2 ERAGON		
	3 SAW 3	4 AGENT X44	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DÉJÀ VU	2 SAW 3	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 AGENT X44
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 AGENT X44	2 DÉJÀ VU		
	3 SAW 3	4 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	5 KASAL KASALI KASALO	

At the Activity Center

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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Honda Car Exhibit January 19 to 23, 2007	Power Rangers Space Patrol Delta (SPD) Meet & Greet Event January 21, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Artbeat Album Launching January 28, 2007	Nestle Breakfast Cereals Event January 6 to 7, 2007

GREENBELT

ETC E! News Daily Launch!
January 19, 2007

Onstage!
Repertory Philippines presents **MOOSE MURDERS**
at REP's Globe Theater - January 12 to 28, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM - Zero-In 5' Convergence Black Bouquet: Juvenal Sanso Prints
Until March 11, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

NOW SHOWING exclusively AT
GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

BASED ON A TRUE STORY
INNOCENT VOICES

War is hell.
Just ask the boy who's about to turn twelve.

MTCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

MAKE SPACE FOR THE AYALA MALLS GRAND '07 SALE

Kick off '07 with up to 70% off!

Big discounts and surprises await you at participating stores from Jan. 13 to 31. Only at Ayala Malls.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0070, Series of 2007

More twists and turns in 'Saw III'

JIGSAW IS DYING—AND HE'S saved the most shocking game for last. In "Saw III," the psychopathic killer turns an abandoned warehouse into a gruesome torture chamber in the third installment of the cult hit horror series, "Saw."

MONTAGE

With his new apprentice, Amanda (Shawnee Smith), the puppet-master behind the intricate, cruel "games" that have baffled the police and terrified a community has once again eluded capture, vanished—and resurfaced at the edge of town.

Dr. Lynn Denlon (Bahar Soomekh) and Jeff (Angus Macfadyen) are unaware that they are about to become the latest pawns on Jigsaw's vicious chessboard. Lynn has to keep Jigsaw alive for as long as it takes Jeff to complete a game of his own.

Racing against the ticking clock of Jigsaw's own fading heartbeat, his new victims must race through vicious tests—unaware that Jigsaw and Amanda have a much bigger plan for them!

George Sison's winning ways

The Guru of Good, George Sison, is launching his new book, "Feng Shui of the Mind: I Am a Winner," at 5:45 p.m., on Jan. 27 at the LRU Business Plaza, Nicanor Garcia st., (Reposo), Bel-Air II, Makati City. The book is full of reminders to build self-worth, create a better self-image, live with enthusiasm, and encourage belief that, with God, all things are possible.

At the same venue, actor Ernie Garcia also launches his third art exhibit, "Women in/on Fiberglass." The cinema's temporary loss is the art world's gain!

'Wire in the Blood'

Hallmark Channel premieres the fourth season of the top crime series, "Wire in the Blood" at 11 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 26. Ardent viewers rave about the show's mind-bending plot twists. Tony Hill gets entangled in a web of controversies and is paired off with a new and ambitious female investigator, Alex Fielding.

Another hit Hallmark Channel show is "Midsomer Murders," with police investigators, Tom Barnaby (John Nettles) and Daniel Scott, embroiled in more chilling crime sagas.

Singing Body course

Join the Singing Body course offered by The Music School of Ryan



HORROR franchise takes another spin at blood and gore.

Cayabyab, especially devised for singers who want to boost their performing skills by getting rid of inhibitions. With workshop master Eladio Pamaran, the workshop module will have another dry run on Jan. 28. Call 637-9840.

VIPs love Krispy Kreme

At the Krispy Kreme flagship store on Bonifacio High Street, The Fort, recently, a VIP Night drew many celebrities, who turned out to be eager fans of the delicious glazed doughnuts.

They included Angel Aquino, Zanjoe Marudo, Agot Isidro, Albert Martinez, Phoenela Baranda, and Borgy and TJ Manotoc.

Krispy Kreme also offers a variety of filled, cake and sprinkled doughnuts, and a wide selection of coffee beverages. Its second store is now open at SM Megamall Bldg. B., upper ground floor.



SISON'S book encourages belief that, with God, all things are possible.

'MCO Arts Festival'

On Feb. 8 at the Francisco Santiago Hall, PCI Bank Tower 1, Makati ave., the annual MCO Arts Festival presents tenor Abdul Candao and pianist Najib Ismail. Concert repertoire includes songs by Charles Ives, Schubert, Donizetti, Silos and Cuenco. Call 840-7000, loc. 2630.

'Chromatext Reloaded'

From Jan. 25 to Feb. 28 at the CCP Main Gallery, "Chromatext Reloaded" presents a fusion of the literary and visual arts with the Philippine Literary Arts Council and friends' works on exhibit. Performance and poetry night is on Feb. 27. Call 832-3702.

On NGC

Today on the National Geographic Channel: 8 a.m., "The Living Edens: Glacier Bay, Alaska's Wild Coast." 9 a.m., "Naked Science: The Deep." 11 a.m., "I Didn't Know That." 2 p.m., "Mad Labs." 6 p.m., "Naked Science: Roman Technology." 7 p.m., "About Asia: Earth Shock: Mega Flood." 9 p.m., "Pompeii Uncovered."

Movies on TV

On HBO, today at 1 p.m., "Back to the Future 3." Tomorrow at 5:15 p.m., "Lords of Dogtown." Jan. 22 at 6:30 a.m., "Ed TV." Jan. 23 at 4:45 p.m., "Sleuth." Jan. 24 at 9 p.m., "Jerry Maguire." Jan. 25 at 9 p.m., "Born on the Fourth of July." Jan. 26 at 6:30 a.m., "Mother."

On Cinemax, today at 9 p.m., "Carlito's Way." Tomorrow at 7 p.m., "The School of Rock." Jan. 22 at 8:15 a.m., "Catch-22." 3:10 p.m., "Alfie" (1966). Jan. 23 at 9:50 a.m., "The Bad News Bears." Jan. 24 at 3:10 p.m., "Shane." Jan. 25 at 1:55 p.m., "Sneakers." Jan. 26 at 9:45 a.m., "Arabesque."

Viewers get what they deserve

By Behn Cervantes

"I TOTALLY AGREE WITH WHAT YOU wrote last week. Please continue with your critiques. We need more of them," an old friend said to me.

I thanked him politely, then asked: "How come you don't write yourself? It's not enough that you say it when we see each other. It's time you give the newspapers feedback!"

There are many thinking Filipinos. Problem is, even if they think right, they don't express it—especially to those who could make a difference. More often than not, they expect someone else to say it for them. And even when they agree, they hardly give the writer the support he needs.

Too passive

This is because we Filipinos are too passive for our own good. We sit around and go "tsk, tsk, tsk" to ourselves and accept bad situations by rationalizing: "Ganyan lang talaga yan, e." We accept the status quo as if we couldn't do anything about it. We have lost the power to insist on our rights as an audience.

This must be the result of the dependency that has come about because of the culture of patronage our leaders have instilled in us. As a result, we don't empower ourselves to bring about the changes we need.

In social functions, I meet strangers who ask me to write about problems they feel should be corrected. I often agree with their complaints, but I wonder why they don't write and complain about them.

They must address their complaints to those who matter. Write to performers, scriptwriters, directors, or to the president of the network! Make yourself visible and audible—give them feedback!

Voice

"But, we don't have your column—we don't have a voice!" they reason. "But, you have a pen or a computer! Write down your complaints, because they are legitimate. Or, send them to the Letters to the Editor section—all the dailies have them! Even the television stations ask for feedback."

If you speak up or write about your legitimate grievances, you will surely have a voice. Then, your opinion will matter. If you don't get the desired result, at least you've made your complaint public—and you are no longer a passive victim.

You only become a victim if you don't do something about it. If you don't, then you deserve your fate!

Attention

If you don't like a particular host's vulgar ways, call the attention of the network president or station manager.

We mustn't merely be perennial belly-achers. It's time for the Filipino audience to speak up! There are enough educated viewers who should put their education to good use.

Unless the public exercises its rights, it'll be easy for irresponsible entertainers and television networks to declare—however wrongly—that the yukky shows they dish out are "what the public wants!"

Unite, or grin and bear it

By Nestor U. Torre

MANY FILM PEOPLE AND viewers disagree with the MMFF's recent decision to use box-office grosses as a major factor for determining the festival's "best" picture.

In fact, some of them are pretty ticked off about it, and are crying for major changes in the controversial film fest. Any chance of that happening? We've been asked.

Answer: Only if our movie people and other concerned individuals and groups really band together, and dig in for the long haul. Individual and occasional protests won't hack it, because the MMFF is a survivor and is used to fending off the occasional brickbat.

Strong example

If protesters want a strong example to go by, the only time that the government ever instituted a major change instigated by coordinated industry protest was in the early '80s:

Many film people were outraged at the excessive and unenlightened censorship prevalent at the time, and felt it was killing the local

movie industry.

So, the Film Academy of the Philippines, then jointly headed by Eddie Romero and Marichu Vera Perez-Maceda, decided to grab the censorship bull by its horns, and put up the Film Academy Classification Board, in a determined bid to prove that local film people were capable of regulating themselves, and didn't need to be controlled by censors.

We were asked to head the FACB, and we told Eddie and Marichu that we could only do the job well if we chose the very best people to join the film classification and self-regulation group.

So, the FACB ended up with a very impressive list of members—the best in the business!

Major change

The top industry lights worked very hard, attending all screenings and participating enthusiastically in analyses and discussions. The point is: It takes a lot of hard work to convince the powers-that-be to effect a major change.

As a result of everyone's best effort, after three years, the FACB had convinced many people, including a number of previously mis-

trustful educators' groups, that Filipino film people indeed didn't need censorship and could regulate themselves.

We left the FACB three years after we had helped organize it, and were replaced by Louie Beltran, who carried on the good work.

And the work was very good, indeed, because, a short time later, President Marcos got the message and replaced the full censorship system with the transitional Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

Sign

Even better, fully half of the new MTRCB's members came from the movie industry—a sign that the government acknowledged that film people could regulate themselves.

So, if people irked by the MMFF's actualizations want to effect major changes, they have to be similarly hardworking, unified, resolute, and willing to stay on course.

All else is unproductive fulmination, and the MMFF will survive in its present compromised form—which is a far cry from the sterling, quality festival it was originally envisioned to be!

MTRCB GENERAL AUDIENCE | ALL AGES ADMITTED

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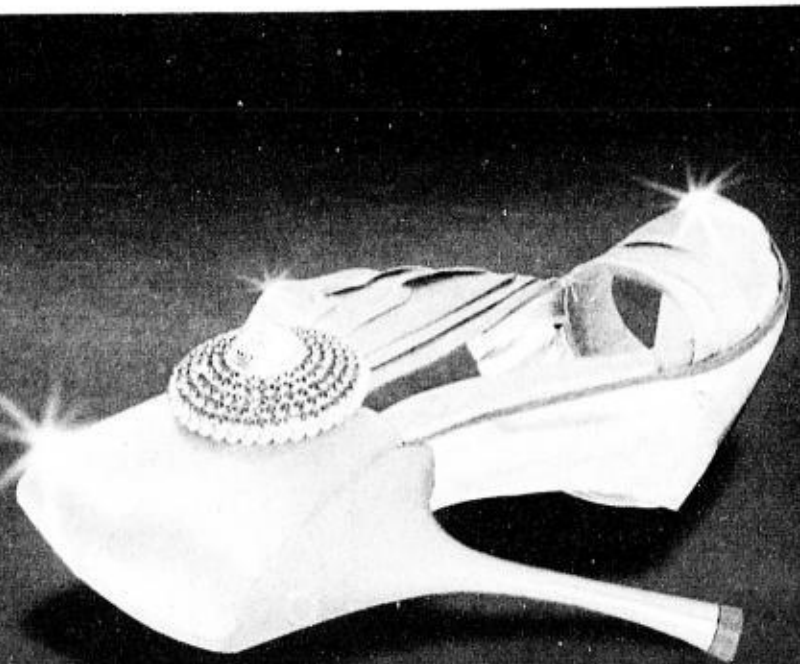
LIVE THE ADVENTURE



MADONNA FREDDIE HIGHMORE DAVID BOWIE

star of
"Charlie & the Chocolate Factory"

ARTHUR
AND THE INVISIBLES



*She was the belle of the ball.
She drove up in her magical carriage, wearing a dress
that took everyone's breath away.*

*At the stroke of midnight, she was nowhere
to be seen. She wasn't even there to receive her award.*

Good thing El was there to cover the whole thing.

*The Stars. The Fashions. The Magic.
Hollywood glamour of fairy tale proportions.*

FASHION POLICE

Golden Globe Awards 2007

8:30 PM

THE GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS

Post Show Special

9:30 PM

SATURDAY • JANUARY 20

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